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Humanities Department

MA in Black Sea Cultural Studies

MASTER THESIS

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ID. 2201100009

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ORIENTAL CULTS IN ROMAN DACIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the dissemination of the oriental cults in Roman Dacia. The Oriental cults were divided into four groups according to the ethno-geographic factor and the study of their dissemination was based on the presence of artistic representations, epigraphic evidence and cult edifices dedicated to oriental deities. The thesis will try to answer some questions concerning the oriental cults, such as:

Which oriental group of deities was present in Roman Dacia and why?

What was the origin of their worshippers?

To which social category did the worshippers belonged to?

Which are the settlements in which oriental deities were venerated?

Where were the oriental deities being worshipped?

The oriental cults were attested in the Roman Empire starting with the 3rd century BC, but their diffusion was rather slow and starting with the 1st century AD until the 4th, these cults registered a constant rise in terms of worshipping. The spread of these cults was possible due to internal reasons, since the Empire was a mosaic of cultural and spiritual landscapes, but also due to the progress registered in sciences, law, literature of the Orient: besides the economic activity of important cities of Alexandria, Antiochia and others, there were also important intellectual and religious activities in these centres which helped the dispersion of their cults within the provinces of the Empire. The Roman army included soldiers recruited from all over the Empire, also from oriental territories. Furthermore, these cults gained more support once emperors of Oriental origin came to power, such as Septimius Severus, Elagabalus and Philip the Arab.

In Dacia, these cults were spread once the province was integrated into the Roman Empire after the war in 106 and an important factor for the spread of new cults was the Roman army. The fact that the Roman legions and their families were stationing in Dacia for a long time (until the official retreat in 271) made possible the direct contact between the local populations and the soldiers; this contact led to the spread of the new

religious manifestations. The soldiers also worshiped specific gods, which were known as *dii militares*. However, we have to mention the fact that some oriental cults were already worshipped in Scythia Minor, where the Greek colonies played an active role in the religious life, since these colonies also worshipped oriental gods when these cults started spreading in the Greek world; in addition to this, some oriental cults were introduced there earlier since this territory was conquered first by the Roman army.

The term *oriental cults* includes several different cults, labelled according to their origin, such as the Egyptian, Syrian, Palmyrian, Asia Minor and Iranian ones and this thesis will keep this labelling as the ordering principle. Their distribution within the Dacian territory varies and it was unequal over time, some cults gaining more popularity, while others were forgotten, some were masked under the phenomenon of religious syncretism and others changed their features according to the *interpretatio romana* process, prior to their arrival to Dacia.

A chapter in this thesis was dedicated to each group of the oriental cults. In order to better understand the doctrine, the myths and the rituals of a particular oriental cult, each chapter will contain a section in which their characteristics and dissemination within the Roman Empire will be described. The next section contains information concerning the dissemination of the oriental group of deities in Roman Dacia, which will be based on artistic monuments (statues, statuettes, reliefs, votive plaques), epigraphic evidence (inscriptions on altars, statues or architectural fragments, tombstones and aediculae) and cult edifices, which were discovered in the main settlements of Dacia: Apulum, Potaissa, Napoca, Micia, Ampelum, Ulpia Traiana, Tibiscum, Sucidava and their rural territories.

After the introduction, the first chapter will focus on Asia Minor cults; the main deities worshipped in Dacia were Cybele, Attis, Men, Sabazios and Glycon. The second chapter include Egyptian deities, such as Isis, Serapis, Harpocrates and Ammon. Next chapter is dedicated to the study of the cults of Syrian deities, such as Dea Syria, Azizos, Sol, Deus Aeternus and the syncretic gods Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Hierapolitanus and Jupiter Heliopolitanus. Several deities originating from Palmyra were also worshipped in Dacia, such as Bêl, Malachbêl and Iarhibol. The last chapter will analyse the dissemination of Mithras's cult in Dacian territories.

The study of the dissemination of the oriental deities will also focus on the factors that enabled the spread of the cult in Dacia (the ethnic component, the social and political relations), some aspects of the cult and the gods' attributes, the origin of the worshipers and their social status and the sacerdotal organization. Maps of the distribution of archaeological finds will be used in order to better understand the dissemination of oriental cults in areas where specific deities were adored.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious rites in Roman Dacia¹ can be seen as a mosaic of different religious cults. More than 130 different deities were found or identified in epigraphic altars, artistic representation and architectural complexes, which were discovered in this Roman province. Several oriental cults were added to the Greek-Roman pantheon, cults which contributed to the diversification of the religious system².

The oriental cults are defined according to the ethno-geographical factor; therefore, it reunited the religious cults coming from the oriental provinces of Asia Minor, Syria, Iran and Egypt, which were integrated into the Roman world³. However, the use of this criterion is partly justified, since at the moment of the dissemination of the oriental cults in Dacia, these were already popular in the Roman Empire. These non-Roman cults did not arrive in Dacia necessarily from the oriental provinces and their worshippers came from the central or western provinces of the Empire; therefore it is difficult to identify their origin⁴.

The popularity of the oriental cults in the Roman Empire, implicitly of Dacia, was determined by different factors, such as the human element and the economic and political relations. The human element determined the ethnic composition of the Roman Empire. Once the oriental provinces were conquered, numerous slaves reached the provinces of the Roman Empire. The main production centres were in the oriental provinces and the development of economic relations with the western Roman territories encouraged merchants to travel wherever there was a chance of profit. In addition to this, the constant need to secure the borders of the Empire sent several military units of oriental origin in Africa and Europe. Consequently, the human element determined the social, economic and political relations within the provinces of the Roman Empire and

¹ I would like to thank professor dr. Yannis Xydopoulos for the suggestions he made concerning the subject of this thesis and for his support and patience during our collaboration.

² *Istoria Românilor*, 2001, II, p. 254.

³ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 180; Turcan R., 1998, p. 15.

⁴ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 180.

the mobility of the population determined the diversification of the various religious cults⁵.

These people acted as dissemination elements of their native religious cults because they kept their religious beliefs wherever they were sent. Some oriental cults slowly started to spread in the Roman Empire already in the 3rd century BC; starting with the 1st century AD, the popularity of these cults grew considerably, since they answered better to the needs of the worshippers⁶. The spread of the Oriental cults within the Roman Empire was also supported by several emperors who found in their doctrine the idea of a ruler by divine right which led to a new form of government, an idea which was the monarchy by divine right⁷.

The geographic position of Dacia was a factor that influenced the dissemination of oriental cults, since it lay at the crossroads of diverse cultural influences. Moreover, the natural resources and the occupations of the population, closely related with the economic potential of the province, attracted colonisers coming from all the corners of the Roman Empire, as well as from the oriental provinces⁸. They settled mostly in urban areas, where they occupied different functions in the administrative system; some of these Orientals became priests of their native cults as the epigraphic evidence suggests⁹.

The oriental cults appealed to the worshippers through the magnificence of processions and celebrations, mysterious ceremonies of initiation and the soteriological character, elements which were in contrast with the austerity of the Roman cults¹⁰. The public celebrations, the daily service, the secret rituals, the promise of salvation, accessibility to all social classes assured the popularity of oriental cults in the Roman territories¹¹. Moreover, the oriental gods were humanized and shared the same destiny as their worshippers: they suffered and died, they were mourned by a wife or a sister, but they were reborn to a new life. This similarity of destinies eased the consciousness of the worshipper and provided him with the hope of a better existence after death, in which

⁵ Husar A., 2003, p. 257-258; Cumont F., 2008, p. 34-35.

⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 19; Cumont F., 2008, p. 33, 35.

⁷ Cumont F., 2008, p. 22-23.

⁸ Husar A., 2003, p. 257-258.

⁹ Petolescu C., 1998, p. 11.

¹⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 20; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 137; *Istoria Românilor*, 2001, II, p. 252; Husar A., 2003, p. 30; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 14; Cumont F., 2009, p. 54.

¹¹ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 137; Macrea M., 2007, p. 314-320; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 198-204; Cumont F., 2009, p. 39-40, 49.

she/he will be equal to the divine power; the belief in the triumph over death was the expression of the conservation instinct¹². The oriental cults acted on the senses, reason and conscious of the worshippers and, thus, they considered Man as a whole. The drama of the Oriental myths and celebrations attracted mostly women, while the moral discipline of Mithras' cult attracted only men¹³.

According to the ethno-geographical factor, four groups were selected to be analyzed in the current thesis: the cult of Asia Minor, the Egyptian cults, the Syrian cults and Mithras' Cult. The analysis of the epigraphic monuments and of the artistic representations with religious character, dedicated to oriental cults, shows an uneven diffusion of these cults within the Roman Dacia. The most popular oriental cult was that of Mithras, since 10% of the votive monuments were dedicated to him. The Syrian and Palmyrian deities received 5% of the votive monuments, the Minor Asian – 3.8% and the Egyptian about 3%¹⁴.

The most popular deity in Dacia that belongs to the first category was Cybele, while Attis was worshipped mostly on funeral monuments, as a protector of tombs. Sabazios (Jupiter Sabazios under the phenomenon of syncretism), Men and Glycon were also present in Dacia; they were brought by small groups of worshippers. The list of the Egyptian cults includes Isis and Serapis, Harpocrates and Ammon, the last one being worshipped as Jupiter Ammon. Numerous Syrian cults were brought to Roman Dacia by military units, merchants and slaves coming from Syria. Most of their gods were assimilated with the supreme Roman deity, Jupiter, who received the oriental epithets derived from settlement in Syria and they became known as Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Jupiter Hierapolis, Jupiter Turmasgades, Jupiter Azizos, Several other Syrian deities can be added to these syncretic deities, such as Dea Syria, Aeternus and Sol Invictus. The distinctive subcategory of the Syrian cults was formed by the gods worshipped in Palmyra, such as Bel, Malachbelus and Iarhibolus. Last but not least,

¹² Turcan R., 1998, p. 41; Cumont F., 2008, p. 39-40; 52-53.

¹³ Cumont F., 2008, p. 53.

¹⁴ *Istoria Românilor*, 2001, II, p. 246-247.

Mithras cult was the most popular oriental cult in Roman Dacia, as numerous votive monuments and cult edifices point¹⁵.

These four categories and the dissemination of their cults will be analyzed in this thesis. Unfortunately, no field-work could have been performed in this case. Consequently, the method used for this study relies totally on the bibliography which was coped with a critical mind. The information presented may not be original, but the main work was to gather all the information available at this point and putting it together, in order to provide a wide perspective concerning the dissemination of oriental cults in Roman Dacia. The study focussed on the dissemination of artistic forms of expressing the worshippers' devotion, on the analysis of the epigraphic evidence and on the examination of cult edifices.

Taking everything into consideration, the analysis of the Oriental cults which were spread in Roman Dacia has not been an easy task, due to the fact that the bibliography concerning the subject of the thesis included a vast number of studies dedicated to various issues related to the topic. From these numerous volumes and articles, only a part was included in the bibliography of this thesis, according to their accessibility by the author. By consulting studies written in the Romanian language, the information concerning the oriental cults in Roman Dacia was made available to non-Romanian readers that, otherwise, could not have access to it and this is one of the contributions of this thesis.

¹⁵ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 134-136; Petolescu C., 1998, p. 6-10; *Istoria Românilor*, 2001, II, p. 252-253; Husar A., 2003, p. 30-36.

I. CULTS OF ASIA MINOR

The list of the most important Asia Minor gods include Cybele, known also as *Magna Deum Mater*, her son Attis, Mèn, Sabazios and Glycon. Their rituals, ceremonies and artistic representations were first spread from Asia Minor in ancient Greece and then in the Roman Empire and its provinces, often after the phenomenon of religious syncretism.

1. Characteristics and dissemination of Asia Minor cults

As the archaeological evidence shows, the cults of Asia Minor were spread unevenly in the Roman territories. In Italy, Cybele and Attis were worshipped particularly in the harbours. Important monuments of these cults were discovered in Roman Africa, in the Iberian Peninsula, Gallia, Dacia and Dalmatia. Mèn was assimilated with Attis, therefore the evidence of his cult is rather scarce in the Roman Empire; however, his cult can be traced in the region of Thrace. Sabazios was worshiped in Italy, Gallia, Dacia, Greece and Africa, while Glycon was popular in Dacia, Moesia and Dalmatia¹⁶.

Before being introduced in Rome, Cybele's cult had undergone centuries of evolution, which reunited primitive customs of Anatolian religion and of Phrygian cult: worshipping of trees, stones, certain sacred animals, performing of orgiastic ceremonies, violent and mystic rituals, which also included voluntary mutilations¹⁷. As in matriarchal societies, the goddess was the supreme deity; therefore, women were awarded the highest ranks in the sacerdotal hierarchy¹⁸.

Cybele's cult was the first oriental cult to be adopted by the Roman Empire in 205 BC and the one that opened the path for other foreign cults in Rome. She was

¹⁶ For more information about the spread of the Minor Asian cults in the Roman Empire, see Graillet H., 1912, p. 477-533; Turcan R., 1998, p. 73-82, p. 364-365.

¹⁷ Cumont F., 2008, p. 57-60. For more information on the origins of Cybele's cult, see Graillet H., 1912, p. 1-24. For written sources concerning the cult of Cybele and Attis, see Turcan R., 1998, p. 46-51.

¹⁸ Graillet H., 1912, p. 55; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 644; 646.

brought after consulting the Sibylline books¹⁹, according to which receiving the foreign deity in Rome was to ensure the success of the campaign in Africa²⁰. In April 204 BC the sacred statue of the goddess was brought to Rome and placed in the sanctuary of Victory²¹. The result was that a year later Hannibal was defeated and the harvest was very good. Consequently, a temple on the Palatine Hill was built in honour of *Magna Mater Idaea* and she was celebrated between the 4th and the 10th of April with public games and representations, called *Ludi Megaleses*²².

Due to the sharp contrast of its celebration and those of the official religion, the cult of Cybele was kept in isolation. The Roman citizens were forbidden to enter Cybele's temple or to participate in its rituals and the clergy was only of Phrygian origin. Moreover, the celebrations, known as the *Megalesia Sacra*, were organized according to the Roman traditions²³. However, the cult gained an important place within the Roman pantheon under Augustus since the goddess was the protector of the gens Julia and, thus, she was supporting the new regime. The relation between the cult and the new regime can also be explained through the work of Vergilius, the *Aeneid*; the ancient author linked the cult of Cybele with the traditions of the Trojans in order to suggest that the goddess was favouring the lineage of Aeneas, thus of Augustus himself, since the emperor was his descendent²⁴.

Under Claudius, the ceremonies of the cult of Attis were officially introduced in Rome's calendar, between the 15th and the 27th of March. Attis represented the dead vegetation that came to life in spring and the moment coincided with the beginning of the new religious year which started with the spring equinox²⁵.

On the 15th of March the *Cannophores* (the carriers of the reeds) announced the beginning of the celebrations by marching towards the temple (*Canna Intrat*), an action which coincides with the mythological scene of Cybele finding Attis who was lost as a child on the banks of the Sangarius river; at the same time the archpriest sacrificed a six-

¹⁹ For different versions of the oracle's sentence, those of Titus Livius, Diodorus of Sicily, Ovidius and Appian, see Graillot H., 1912, p. 26-30.

²⁰ Graillot H., 1912, p. 25; Cumont F., 2008, p. 55; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 123.

²¹ Graillot H., 1912, p. 53; Turcan R., 1998, p. 51; Trofin L., 2009, p. 98-99.

²² Turcan R., 1998, p. 53; Cumont F., 2008, p. 56-57; Marienescu A.M., 2008, 124.

²³ Turcan R., 1998, p. 54-55; Cumont F., 2008, p. 60-61; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 124; Trofin L., 2009, p. 99.

²⁴ Graillot H., 1912, p. 108-111.

²⁵ Graillot H., 1912, p. 116; Turcan R., 1998, p. 60; Cumont F., 2008, p. 64.

year-old bull. The period between 16th and 22nd of March was known as *Castus Matris Deum*, days of abstinence and chastity. On the 22nd of March, the spring equinox, the confraternity of the *Dendrofores* (=carriers of trees) cut and transported a pine tree to the temple; the tree symbolized the dead body of Attis. The next day was dedicated to mourning and lamentations and the funeral of Attis followed on the 24th of March, day known under the name *Sanguis*, when blood sacrifices were performed. At night, the *Pannychis* (=the vigil) was performed until dawn, when the priest announced the resurrection of Attis; this marked the beginning of *Hilaria*. This day was reserved for banquets, different masked performances and was characterized by exaggerated joy. After a day of rest, *Requietio*, the celebrations ended with the purification of the statue of Cybele in the Almo river (*Lavatio* or *Dies Lavationis*)²⁶.

Attis and Cybele formed the divine couple both in rite and in myth²⁷ and under the period of the Empire they acquired the attribute of unlimited power – *omnipotentes*²⁸. Attis was assimilated with the vegetation, but also with the sun because his celebrations evolved around the spring equinox²⁹. Moreover, the solar Attis acquired the lunar attributes of Mèn, a god adored in Phrygia and the surrounding territories. Mèn was the ruler of the celestial, terrestrial and underground worlds, often being related with the kingdoms of both the living and the dead. In his artistic representations, he was wearing the Phrygian cap and a crescent on his shoulders, holding a sceptre or a spear in his left hand, with his left foot resting on a bull's head. Though evidence of his cult can be traced in Greece already in the 4th century BC and later on in Thrace, he was rather unknown to the Roman world because his cult was absorbed by the cult of the *Magna Deum Mater*. Therefore, Attis gained the attributes of Mèn, which lead to the transformation of the former into the ruler of the dead and this character justifies the numerous representations of Attis on funeral artistic works³⁰.

Sabazios, a god of Thracian origin, was worshiped in Asia Minor along with Cybele, though in the Roman Empire he was often confused with Dionysos and

²⁶ Graillot H., 1912, p. 117-140 provides a very detailed description of the celebrations; Turcan R., 1998, p. 61-64; Husar A., 2003, p. 33-34; Cumont F., 2008, p. 64-65; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 116-117.

²⁷ Cumont F., 2008, p. 61.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

³⁰ Popa A., 1967, p. 147; Turcan R., 1998, p. 83; Cumont F., 2008, p. 69-70.

Jupiter.³¹ According to the etymology of his name, he was the god of beer, which was used during his celebration. Initially, he was the god of nature and vegetation, of fertility and agriculture. His symbols are the sacred animals, the snake, the bull and the ram, to which the sacred tree, the pine, can be added. Consequently, given the dual character of his symbols, he is the ruler of life and death, the creator and the receiver of life³².

Starting with the 5th century BC, the cult of Sabazios spread from Asia Minor to Greece where he was associated with Dionysos. His celebration took place during the day, and both men and women participated in it. After the expansion of the Romans in Asia Minor, the cult of Sabazios was introduced in Rome where he was identified with Jupiter. However, in the territories of the Roman Empire his cult was rather sporadic and objects of his cult were discovered in Italy, Gallia, Dalmatia, Moesia Inferior and Dacia³³. The most common representations of the god were the bronze hands (*pantee*)³⁴.

Glycon is an Asia Minor deity coming from Paphlagonia, where he was worshipped as the new incarnation of Asclepius and adored, because of his healing and oracular powers. The cult appeared in the 2nd century when it was created by a certain Alexander³⁵, disciple of a magus from Tyana, and Coccônas. After gaining followers, the municipality of Abonoteichos built a temple in honour of the god, whose supreme priest became Alexander. In order to strengthen the cult, the priest showed himself to the crowd with a snake wrapped around his body; the snake was wearing a mask of a dog's head with human hair and this image of the monstrous deity became the symbol of the cult³⁶. In addition, Alexander organized the celebrations of Glycon which lasted three days. The first day started with a proclamation which excluded the atheists, the Christians and the Epicureans, followed by a theatrical performance that was evoking the birth of Apollo and his wedding with Coronis, the mother of Asclepius. The next day was dedicated to Glycon and his birth and the last one was celebrating the wedding of Podalirius, son of Asclepius, with the mother of Alexander and the love of Selene and

³¹ Turcan R., 1998, p. 335-336; Cumont F., 2008, p. 72.

³² Macrea M., 1961, p. 69-70; *Ibid.*, 1978, p. 112-113; Husar A., 2003, p. 107.

³³ Macrea M., 1961, 70-71; *Ibid.*, 1978, p. 114-115; Turcan R., 1998, p. 361-363.

³⁴ Turcan R., 1998, p. 364-365, p. 380; Cumont F., 2008, p. 72; Trofin L., 2009, p. 100.

³⁵ For a full account of the story, see Turcan R., 1998, p. 293-295.

³⁶ Culcer A., 1967, p. 614-616; Chiş S., 1995, p. 97-98; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 200.

Alexander, seen as Endymion³⁷. The cult of Glycon spread in the Balkan peninsula, where he was very popular because the snake was considered a thaumaturge, a magic performer, and was also present in other mysteries, such as those of Sabazios³⁸. In the Danubian area, his cult was present in the Greek colony of Tomis, where a very good quality statue of the god was discovered in 1962, while a priest of Glycon is mentioned at Histria in the mid 2nd century³⁹. The artistic representation of Glycon appeared on coins issued by Callatis, Marcianopolis, Nicolopis-ad-Istrum and Hadrianopolis. In Dacia he was worshipped at Apulum, a city known for the presence of many oriental cults. Two other representations of Glycon were found in Paris⁴⁰.

2. Asia Minor cults in Roman Dacia

2.1. Artistic representations and epigraphic monuments

In Dacia, the Asia Minor cults were introduced by colonizers of oriental origin as their names on their dedications show; the cult of Cybele is represented by approximate 26 monuments, while Attis is depicted on 72 artistic representations⁴¹. Worshippers of Sabazios dedicated to the god approximately 8 artistic representations and epigraphic monuments; the cult of Mèn was rather sporadic in Roman Dacia, as well as that of Glycon⁴².

2.1.1. Cybele – *Magna Deum Mater*

The iconographic representations of Cybele depict the goddess sitting on a throne, wearing a mural crown, *polos* or *kalathos*, holding in her hands a *tympanon* and a *phiale*, either having a lion cub on her knees or being flanked by two lions. In other cases, Cybele is shown in a *quadriga* pulled by lions or riding a lion⁴³. The cult of

³⁷ Chiş S., 1995, p.98; Turcan R., 1998, p. 295.

³⁸ Culcer A., 1967, p. 614-616; Turcan R., 1998, p. 298; Macrea M., 2007, p. 319.

³⁹ Chiş S., 1995, p. 99.

⁴⁰ Culcer A., 1967, p. 614-616; Turcan R., 1998, p. 296; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 200.

⁴¹ Husar A., 2003, p. 106.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 108-109.

⁴³ Graillot H., 1912, p. 190-191; Husar A., 2003, p. 105; Macrea A., 2007, p. 314.

Cybele arrived in Dacia with the first colonizes after the Dacian wars⁴⁴. It was confirmed by several inscriptions discovered in this territory of which five were found in Apulum, two in Drobeta and one in Aquae⁴⁵. The earliest inscription discovered until now dates from the beginning of Hadrian's reign (117-138) and was discovered in Apulum in which Cybele appears as *Μητρός Τροκλιμηνής*⁴⁶, while another mentions the *collegium dendroforum*, the carries of the sacred pine during the spring ceremonies of Cybele and Attis⁴⁷. T. Fl. Longinus and his family and G. Staius Pollio dedicated altars to the goddess in Apulum as well⁴⁸. A *collegium Asianorum* is mentioned on an inscription from Napoca⁴⁹.

Women were the main category of worshippers in the Roman world. In Dacia, Abuccia Claudiana dedicated an altar to the Great Mother in the 3rd century and Iulia Maximilia built a portico as part of her promise to the goddess (Drobeta)⁵⁰. A representation of Cybele was discovered in Germisara's territory, in the waters of Cugir River; on a stone plaque appears a lion walking and a medallion framing the head of a woman wearing the Phrygian cap⁵¹. Three sculptures of Cybele were discovered in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa⁵² and four in Romula (**Fig. I. 1**), two heads of terracotta figurines, one fragment of a votive relief and a marble statuette depicting the goddess sitting on a throne between two lions⁵³. Similar representations were revealed in Napoca⁵⁴ and in Statio Aquensis⁵⁵. A fragmentary calk block depicting the bust of Cybele was discovered in Moldovenești, Cluj County: the goddess has long hair in

⁴⁴ Petolescu C., 1971, p. 646.

⁴⁵ See Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no. 2 for reproductions of the inscriptions; Husar A., 2003, p. 106.

⁴⁶ Troklime seems to be a geographical epithet, but the locality was not identified. Tudor, D., 1968a, p. 164; Petolescu C., 2002, p. 227; Husar A., 2003, p. 106; Popescu M., 2004, p. 2; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 198.

⁴⁷ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no. 2; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 157; Husar A., 2003, p. 106; Popescu M., 2004, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no. 2; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 164; Popescu M., 2004, p. 2; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 59. The inscription CIL, III, 1100 is mentioned by Tudor D., 1968a, p. 228 as being discovered in Napoca.

⁴⁹ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no. 2; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 228.

⁵⁰ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no. 2; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 297, 301; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 644; Popescu M., 2004, p. 2.

⁵¹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 135-136.

⁵² Husar A., 2003, p. 107.

⁵³ Petolescu C., 1971, p. 645 mentions only the marble statue; Tudor D., 1978, p. 368; Popescu M., 2004, p. 2 mentions the four sculptures.

⁵⁴ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no. 2.

⁵⁵ Petolescu C., 1971, p. 645; Tudor D., 1978, p. 368.

stripes and wears a *kalathos*; in the right upper corner of the block there is the image of a head belonging to an unidentified character. The relief fragment dates from 2nd to 3rd centuries AD⁵⁶.

2.1.2. Attis

Attis is usually depicted as a young shepherd wearing the Phrygian cap and costume, with his *pedum* in his hand and his legs crossed. God of death and resurrection, he became the protector of tombs⁵⁷. In Dacia, Attis is known from 72 images on funeral monuments; there is only one votive statue of the god from Sucidava (see *infra*). The most numerous funeral monuments were discovered in Apulum-18 monuments⁵⁸, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa-16⁵⁹ and in Ampelum-7⁶⁰, to which may be added those from Cristești, Deva, Gârbău, Micia⁶¹, Germisara⁶², Ilișua⁶³, Sucidava⁶⁴, Szamos-Ujvar⁶⁵ and Tibiscum⁶⁶.

A funeral statue of Attis is known from the History Museum of Gherla, though its exact place of discovery is not known. It was made of tuff and only the bust of the statue survived: it is a young man with draped garment over which he has a cloak that falls on his back. The left hand is on his abdomen, holding the end of a *pedum*; his right hand is lifted and supports the head which is slightly inclined. The features of its face are very schematic⁶⁷ (**Fig. I. 2.**).

A funeral altar in the shape of an *aedicula* was revealed in Apulum. The well preserved altar depicts the image of Attis within a simple frame, with an arcade in the upper part. The god wears the Phrygian cap, a long shirt that goes over his knees, a short tunic and a cloak that makes several folds on the chest; the cloak is caught with a fibula. Attis has a meditative expression which is suggested by his attitude: his head rests on his

⁵⁶ Jude M. and Pop C., 1972, p. 20.

⁵⁷ Husar A., 2003, p. 107; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 110.

⁵⁸ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 189; Husar A., 2003, p. 107.

⁵⁹ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, n.2; Husar A., 2003, p. 107; Pop C., 2006-2007, p. 65.

⁶⁰ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, n.2; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 186; Husar A., 2003, p. 107.

⁶¹ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 189.

⁶² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 134; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 189.

⁶³ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 266.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

⁶⁵ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no.2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Nemeti I. and Zăgrănu R., 2008, p. 282.

right hand and his body on a curved *pedum*. This attitude is suitable for funeral monuments. The details of the image recommend it as a fine quality work, probably dating from the time of the Severans dynasty⁶⁸ (**Fig. I. 3**). In the same Roman city a fragmented funeral altar was discovered depicting the image of Attis (which is similar to the one mentioned above, though smaller); the difference is the presence of a bird. In addition, an anepigraphic altar with three decorated sides also portrays Attis. The block was made of limestone and depicts two symmetric images of Attis on the lateral sides of the monument; the same attitude of melancholy and sadness dominated the two artistic representations⁶⁹. Similar symmetric representations of Attis were discovered on a funeral monument from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa: Attis is depicted on the lateral sides of a *tabula ansata* in his usual position, leaning on a *pedum*, wearing the Phrygian cap⁷⁰.

In Potaissa was discovered the representation of Attis on an *aedicula* made of yellowish chalk. The sculptural representations are divided into two parts by a horizontal line. On the upper part there is a woman standing alone, while in the lower part Attis is represented as a young man facing his right side, leaning on a *pedum*. He wears a cone-shaped cap on his head and a long shirt on top of which he has a thick coat; the hood hangs on his back. He wears pleated pants. The body is sustained on his left foot, while the other one is bended over it. A dolphin with his head down is depicted on the right corner and on the upper left corner there is a pan-pipe. The technique used indicated that this work dates from the 2nd century⁷¹.

2.1.3. Sabazios

Like Attis and Mên, Sabazios was depicted as wearing the Phrygian cap or as putting his foot on a ram's head; he had the thyrsus and the pine cone as divine attributes, to which the sacred animals can be added.⁷² Sabazios is depicted on several sculptural monuments in Dacia. Son of Zeus and Persephone, under the phenomenon of

⁶⁸ Moga V., 1975, p. 125-127.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 127-129.

⁷⁰ Wollmann V., 1975, p. 213-214.

⁷¹ Bujor, E., 1967, p. 195-198.

⁷² Turcan R., 1998, p. 362.

syncretism Sabazios acquired the powers and symbols of his father, such as the eagle and the lightning; later he replaced his father, thus becoming known as Jupiter Sabazios⁷³.

The god appears on a relief block from Drobeta composed of two parts. On the left part, Sabazios appears as Jupiter *tronans*, wearing a crown, with a pine cone in his right hand and a sceptre in his left. His hair and beard are fashioned after the Dacian customs. On the upper side, the god is flanked by an eagle and the busts of Sol and Luna. The other part of the relief depicts another god, Jupiter Zbelsurdus. The god is standing and holds a lightning bolt in his right hand. An eagle sits on his left arm. The inscription is placed above his head. The Romanian authors recognized a Thracian or Dacian god in the figure and name of this god⁷⁴ (**Fig. I. 4**).

Jupiter Sabazios appears on a dedication from Potaissa from the end of the 2nd century⁷⁵. Another cult monument dedicated to Sabazios was discovered in 1876 in Jena, Timiș County. It is a bronze votive right hand of the god fashioned in *benedictio latina* with the god's apotropaic symbols. On the thumb there is a pine cone, on the palm a ram's head resting on an eagle with its wings stretched and its head turned to the right. The eagle appears to be sited on a pedestal. To the right follows a turtle and a snake, then a caduceus with wings and snakes attached to it in its upper end, in the shape of number eight and their heads facing each other. Next are a *liknon* with a frog above it, a large basket with lid and a lizard. The inferior part or the hand is decorated with oblique notches⁷⁶ (**Fig. I. 5**). The cult of Sabazios was also present in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa⁷⁷; probably his cult was present in Tibiscum where a bronze plaque depicting the god was discovered⁷⁸.

⁷³ Macrea M., 1961, p. 65; this article was included in the volume *De la Burebista la Dacia postromană. Repere pentru o permanență istorică*, edited by Mihai Bărbulescu, 1978, p. 106-125; Turcan R., 1998, p. 366; Trofin L., 2009, p. 101.

⁷⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 301; *Ibid.*, 1978, p. 377; Macrea M., 2007, p. 318.

⁷⁵ Macrea M., 1961, p. 64; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 216; Macrea M., 1978, p. 108, 115; Husar A., 2003, p. 108.

⁷⁶ Macrea M., 1961, p. 67-69; *Ibid.*, 1978, p. 111-112; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 126; Alföldy-Găzdac Á., 2003, p. 177-178; Macrea M., 2007, p. 318.

⁷⁷ Pop C., 2006-2007, p. 65.

⁷⁸ Macrea M., 2007, p. 318.

2.1.4. Mèn

Artistic representations of Mèn in Dacia are rather scarce, though he is mentioned in several dedications on altars; his image or attributes are depicted in artistic representations. This can only point to the fact that Mèn was either not popular in Dacia or he was assimilated in other Asia Minor cults⁷⁹. Mèn was known in Dacia from a dedication revealed in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa with an unique epithet in the Roman Empire, *Cilvastianus*, derived from a locality in Asia Minor⁸⁰.

An altar of Mèn was discovered in Apulum in 1909. The altar dating from the beginning of the 3rd century has the shape of a truncated pyramid and was made of sandstone. On the upper part, a bull's head within a frame is depicted; in the middle part – an imitation of *tabula ansata* with the initials *I.O.M.*, and in the lower part – a flat surface without ornamentation. According to the inscription, the altar was dedicated to *Iovi Optimo Maximo*, but the presence of the bull's head leads to an oriental deity: it is the symbol of Mèn, as it appears on several other representations of the god⁸¹. Under the phenomenon of religious syncretism, Mèn was identified with Jupiter, case known from other inscriptions, such as the one from Kavaia, Albania, therefore the assumption that this altar belongs to Mèn is completely justified⁸².

A possible altar of Mèn was discovered in Alba Iulia-Partoș in 1867-1868. The altar is well preserved and has three ornamented sides and one side left blank for the dedication which was never written. A crown of laurel leaves is depicted on the upper part of the altar. The upper part is decorated with acroteria and vegetal motifs. The frieze decorates the four lateral sides of the altar and consists of overlapping double astragals. A beardless male head is schematically depicted on one of the lateral sides, with short hair and a wreath of sun's rays. On the opposite side there is a rosette and on the third a bull's head. The lack of an inscription made the interpretation difficult, but the presence of the bull's head indicated the cult of Mèn⁸³.

⁷⁹ Husar A., 2003, p. 109.

⁸⁰ Popa A., 1967, p. 147; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 90; Petolescu C., 2002, p. 227; Husar A., 2003, p. 109; Pop C., 2006-2007, p. 65; Macrea M., 2007, p. 318; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 198; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 134.

⁸¹ Popa A., 1967, p. 145-146; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 126-127; Husar A., 2003, p. 109.

⁸² Popa A., 1967, p. 148-149.

⁸³ Pop C., 1971, p. 561-663.

In a bilingual dedication on an altar from Potaissa, the god was worshipped as Μην άνεικητως, the undefeated Mèn. The dedication was made by the flagman of the XIII Gemina Legion, Aurelius Marcianus. The monument dates from the second half of the 2nd century or the beginning of the following century⁸⁴. The fact that the name of the god appears in Greek, while the rest of the dedication is in Latin, points to the possibility that Aurelius Marcianus was coming from Asia Minor⁸⁵.

*Μηνι άνεικητως, Aur(elius)/ Marcianus/ signifer l(egionis) g(eminae) voto posuit*⁸⁶

A clay pattern from Romula may depict the god: a nude child carries in his hands leaves and fruits that he offers to a lamb which is under a tree⁸⁷.

A bronze statuette depicting Mèn was discovered in Drobeta. It is well preserved though the left hand and the attribute from the right one are missing. The god puts his body weight on the right foot, while the left is resting on a bull's head. The right arm is lifted to the level of his forehead and the left arm is stretched forward. His facial features are well depicted. He has the Phrygian cap on his head and wears a double *chiton* and a *himation* fixed to his right shoulder with a fibula. The cloak makes several folds on the chest and covers his back. The statuette dates from the second half of the 2nd to the beginning of the 3rd century. Similar artistic representations are located in Paris and at the Columbia University of Missouri⁸⁸.

2.1.5. Glycon

In Dacia, the cult of Glycon is present in Apulum, where two altars were dedicated to him at the command of the god himself (*iusso dei*)⁸⁹. The first altar was made of limestone and on the upper side depicts a coiled snake of which the head and a part of the body are broken. The capital decorated with two triangular frontons of

⁸⁴ Popa A., 1967, p. 147-148; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 215; Husar A., 2003, p. 109; Popescu M., 2004, p. 158, 190; Macrea M., 2007, p. 318; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 113.

⁸⁵ Popescu M., 2004, p. 158, 190.

⁸⁶ Cf. Bujor E., 1967, p. 187. In Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 231 the inscription appears as: *Μηνι άνεικητω, AUR(elius)/ MARCIANUS/ SIGNIFER L(e)G(ionis)VOTO POSUIT*.

⁸⁷ Tudor D., 1978, p. 381.

⁸⁸ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 259.

⁸⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 162; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 183; Zugravu N., 2004-2005, p. 104; Macrea M., 2007, p. 319; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 200.

acanthus leaves. The altar was dedicated by Marcus Antonius Oneas, probably a Greek according to his name⁹⁰:

Glyconi/ M. Ant./ Oneas/ iusso dei/ l.p. (CIL III, 1021)⁹¹

The second altar was discovered in the 16th century, but is now disappeared; fortunately, the inscription was copied:

G[ly]co/ M. Aur./ Theodo/tus/ ius/so dei p. (CIL, III, 1022)⁹²

2.2. Cult edifices

2.2.1. Archaeologically investigated

Until the present day, no cult edifices dedicated to Asia Minor gods were archaeologically investigated in the area of the former Roman Dacia.

2.2.2. Epigraphic evidence of cult edifices

The presence of a *collegium dendroforum* (the carriers of the sacred pine - see *supra*) and other inscriptions from Apulum indicate the fact that a temple of *Magna Deum Mater* must have been erected in this Roman city⁹³. Henry Graillot mentions a chapel of Cybele build close to the barracks during the period of Trajan or Hadrian by T. Fl. Longinus and his family⁹⁴.

Another temple of Cybele is thought to have been built in Drobeta, an assumption based on two dedications made by Abuccia Claudiana and Iulia Maximilia (see *supra*). The latter built a portico, which may have been part of the temple, though its exact location was not discovered. Taking into consideration that i) part of the spring celebrations was the *Lavatio*, during which the statue of the goddess was carried from the temple to a river where it was purified with water, and that ii) Drobeta was close to the Danube river, the portico could have been built on the river banks. Consequently, a

⁹⁰ Culcer A., 1967, p. 613.

⁹¹ Cf. Culcer A., 1967, p. 613; Zugravu N., 2004-2005, p. 117.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Graillot H., 1912, p. 485; Petolescu C., 2000, p. 260; Popescu M., 2004, p. 189.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

temple already existed at the moment the portico was erected⁹⁵, though in one of his works Dumitru Tudor suggested that the portico was built around the temple⁹⁶.

M.D.M. Iulia Maximilia v.s.l.m. porticum de suo fecit (CIL, III, 1582)⁹⁷

M.D.M. Abuccia Claudiana v.s.l.m. (CIL, III, 8016)⁹⁸

I.O.M. Sabazios is mentioned in a dedication discovered in 1912 at Apulum⁹⁹. It was made by an *aedilicius* for Caracalla and Iulia Domna; it dates from 212-217 AD.

*[Iovi or I.O.M. S]abasio/ [pro sal(ute) I]mpe(eratoris) Caes(aris)/
[M(arci) Aur(elii) Ant]onini pii fel(icis)/ [Aug(usti) et Iuliae] Aug(ustae)
matris/ [Aug(usti) ab ipso or a deo i]ussus fecit/ [L. Aurel(ius)?
M]arcianus/ [aedil]icius¹⁰⁰*

The dedication was made at the command of the god himself, *issus fecit*, and the verb *fecit* might indicate a sacred construction which was erected in honour of the god, a temple, a sanctuary or an *aedicula*, rather than an altar or a sculptural monument¹⁰¹.

2.2.3. Possible locations of religious edifices

Two inscriptions, one from Germisara and one from Napoca, mention the existence of *galli*, priests of Phrygian origin that participated in the spring celebrations¹⁰², which points to the existence of a religious edifice dedicated to *Magna Deum Mater* in each of these cities¹⁰³.

The discovery of a marble statue representing Attis in natural size, the only votive monument of this god in Roman Dacia, is the argument for assuming the existence of a sanctuary in Sucidava¹⁰⁴ (**Fig. I. 6**).

⁹⁵ Graillot H., 1912, p. 485; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 644; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 135; Popescu M., 2004, p. 2.

⁹⁶ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 297.

⁹⁷ Cf. Graillot H., 1912, p. 484, no. 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 164; Husar A., 2003, p. 108.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Macrea M., 1961, p. 66-67, 72-73; *Ibid.*, 1978, p. 110-111, 116-117.

¹⁰¹ Macrea M., 1961, p. 72-73; *Ibid.* 1978, p. 116-117; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 138-139; Zugravu N., 2004-2005, p. 104.

¹⁰² For more information about these priests, see Graillot H., 1912, p. 287-319; Husar A., 2003, p. 54-55.

¹⁰³ Graillot H., 1912, p. 484-485.

¹⁰⁴ Tudor D., 1965, p. 54; *Ibid.*, 1978, p. 368; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 153; Husar A., 2003, p. 107; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 198.

Magna Deum Mater probably had a temple built in her honour in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, as well because three statues of the goddess were discovered here, of which the marble one was of big dimensions¹⁰⁵.

A possible location of a temple dedicated to I.O.M. Sabazios and I.O.M. Zbelsurdos is Drobeta, as the fragmented plaque discovered here with the names of the two gods and their depictions seems to point (see *supra*). The big dimension of the plaque indicates that it was probably placed in a temple¹⁰⁶.

On a bronze plaque from Tibiscum (**Fig. I. 7**) dating from the 2nd-3rd centuries AD, the Sabazios appears standing between the columns of the façade of a temple with a triangular pediment. In the corners of the pediment can be distinguished two acroteria, while an ornament in the shape of a rosette decorated the upper part of it, details that are depicted in an orientalised manner. The naked Sabazios holds the lightning and the sceptre in his hands, an eagle lies at his feet. On the shoulders and back, the god wears a cloak. A snake with its head up is depicted parallel with the god's body. The figure and posture of the god correspond to the classic Greek-roman type of Jupiter, but the snake is the attribute of Sabazios. Moreover, the frame is analogue with the fronton of the reliefs from Copenhagen and Berlin in which Sabazios also appears¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵ Tudor D., 1978, p. 368; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 153; Husar A., 2003, p. 106-107; Pop C., 2006-2007, p. 65.

¹⁰⁶ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 156.

¹⁰⁷ Macrea M., 1961, p. 78-80; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 39; Macrea M., 1978, p. 121-123.

3. Annexe I.

Fig. I. 1. Cybele from Romula cf. Petolescu C., 1971, p. 645, Fig. 2.



Fig. I. 2. Funeral statue depicting Attis, Gherla cf. Nemeti I. and Zăgreanu R., 2006-2007, p. 285, Fig. 3.



Fig. I. 3. Fragment of *aedicula* representing Attis cf. Moga V., 1975, p. 126, Fig. 5.



Fig. I. 4. Attis from Sucidava cf. Tudor D., 1978, p. 364, Fig. 99/3

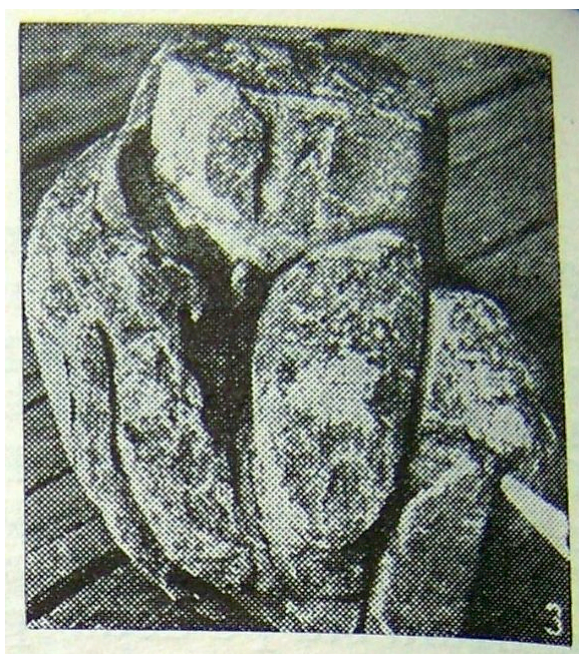


Fig. I. 5. I.O.M. Sabazios cf. Tudor D., 1978, p. 392, Fig. 116/1.

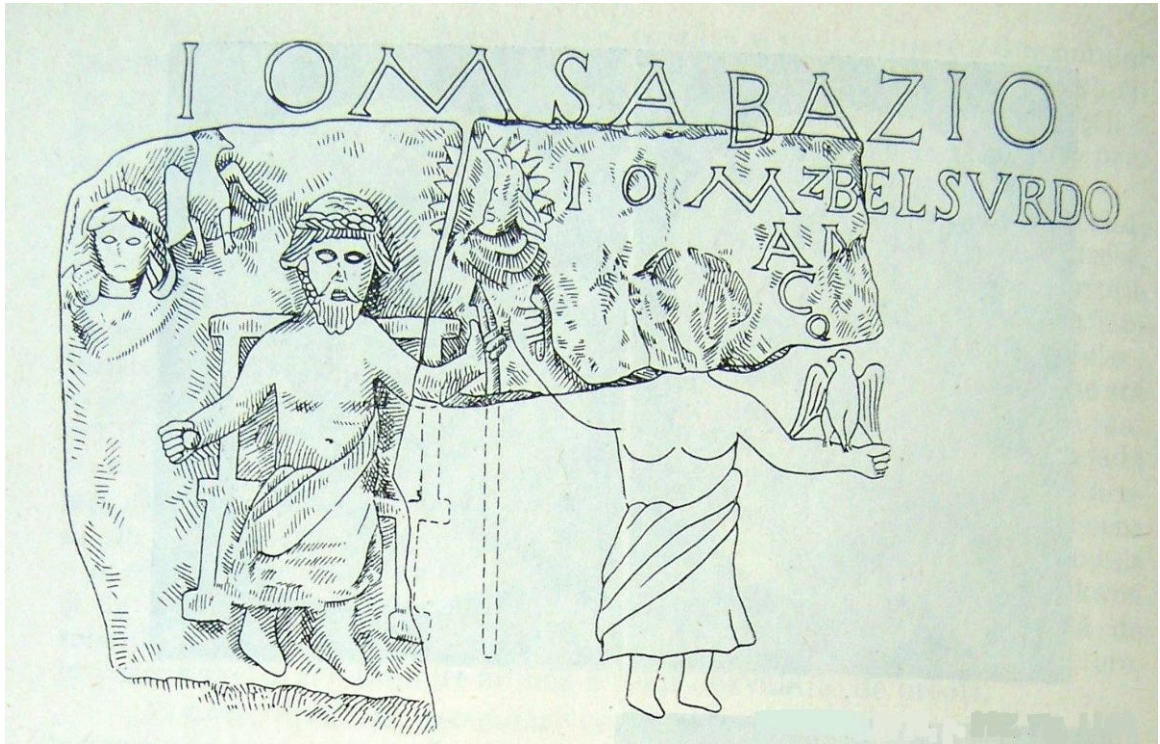
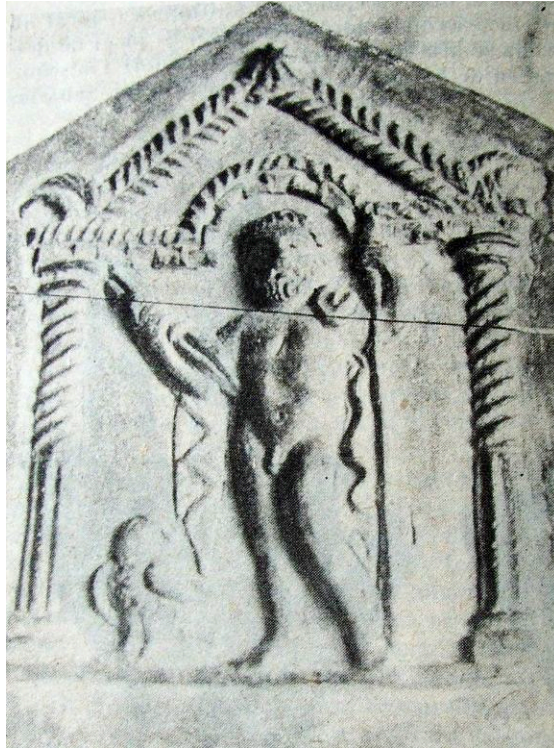


Fig. I. 6. The symbols depicted on Sabazios' votive hand from Jena cf. Macrea M., 1978, p. 113, Fig. 8.



Fig. I. 7. Sabazios on a bronze plaque from Tibiscum cf. Macrea M., 1961, p. 78, Fig. 6.



II. EGYPTIAN CULTS

The Egyptian cults have a long history and are well known to scientists. Their evolution can be traced through several millennia and their sacred texts can be read in original. The images of the Egyptian gods and their rituals survived until present day; therefore it is easy to identify specific types of artistic representations and the scenario of rituals and celebrations. In the Greek as well as the Roman world the most popular Egyptian gods were Serapis (identified with Osiris), Isis, Ammon and Harpocrates.

1. Characteristics and dissemination of the Egyptian cults

Serapis was known to the Greek and Roman world already in the 3rd century BC Alexandria, where Ptolemy I built a *Serapeum* in honour of the god. The name of the god is considered to be composed from the names *Osiris* and *Apis*-the bull and means *Osiris the bull* since after his death he became the ruler of the world of the dead and it was also believed that Osiris lived in the world through Apis. Serapis was replacing the cult of Osiris, thus he had a double character since he was the ruler of both the world of the living and the one of the dead. The policy of Ptolemy I was to unite the Greeks and the Egyptians of his kingdom, therefore he created the image of the new Serapis, which combined both Greek and local elements. His cult became the official cult of Ptolemy Soter as it was a common practice in Egypt for each dynasty to have their own god which would serve their political purposes¹⁰⁸.

In order to facilitate the acceptance of the new cult, the Greek language was introduced in the rituals and hymns were dedicated to Serapis. This propaganda also changed the artistic representations of the god and new features were added which brought the representations closer to the Greek types. The Greek sculptor Bryaxis was the creator of the cult statue at the Serapeum in Alexandria; his work became the prototype of the sculptural representations of the god: a majestic figure sits on a throne,

¹⁰⁸ Turcan R., 1998, p. 92-93; Cumont F., 2008, p. 81-82; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 103.

wears a *calathos*¹⁰⁹ on his head and a sceptre in one of his hands while the other rests on the head of Cerberus¹¹⁰.

The syncretism moderated the rejection caused among the Greek population by the Egyptian religion, namely the superstitions and the cult of animals. The fast of the temples and the ceremonial, the age of their cults and the knowledge of the priests had always fascinated the Greek mind. Moreover, Osiris-Serapis was seen as Dionysos or Bacchus which facilitated the adoption of the Egyptians cults. Temples dedicated to Serapis were built also in Athens and Halicarnassus¹¹¹.

As patroness of navigation, Isis was worshipped on the coasts of Syria, Asia Minor and Greece by sailors and merchants¹¹². She is also depicted as a mother, the artistic representations often showing her holding a baby, and as wife of the chthonic god, wearing the *calathos* as well; therefore she was identified with the Greek goddesses Demeter and Kore-Proserpina¹¹³.

In the different Greek representations of Isis, she is assimilated with other goddesses, such as Tyche or Aphrodite, the multiple characteristics of the Egyptian goddess being the reason for her to easily adapt to the Greek world. In the 2nd century BC her cult became official in Athens, where a temple was built to honour her; moreover, the image of Isis and of her *basileion* appeared on coins issued by Athens. On Greek territories the cult spread rapidly, for example in Delphi, Delos, Argos and Thessaloniki¹¹⁴. Isis' popularity in these territories is justified by several aspects of her cult: her character of a mother goddess, her role in the Egyptian myth which depicted her as a faithful wife, the resemblance with Demeter and the Eleusinian mysteries¹¹⁵.

In the Roman world, Isis was worshipped from the 2nd century BC, though the Senate was against the public manifestations of her cult. In the 1st century BC, there was an attempt to build a temple, but the initiative was shortly abandoned. In the first

¹⁰⁹ A *calathos* (from the Greek κάλαθος)¹⁰⁹ is a type of basket used for keeping fruits, flowers or wool; it is the symbol of fertility, but it also has a chthonic character cf. Turcan R., 1998, p. 93.

¹¹⁰ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies et des religions des sociétés traditionnelles et du monde antique*, 1994, p. 588, hereafter *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*; Turcan R., 1998, p. 93-94; Cumont F., 2008, p. 82-83; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 79.

¹¹¹ Cumont F., 2008, p. 83-85.

¹¹² *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 588; Cumont F., 2008, p. 85.

¹¹³ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 588; Turcan R., 1998, p. 95.

¹¹⁴ Turcan R., 1998, p. 97-99.

¹¹⁵ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 588.

decades of the following century, the construction of temples was strictly prohibited in Rome and its close territories because of lack of decency of the cult and because of its origin. The rituals and the doctrine of the Egyptian cult were against the Roman *mos maiorum*: they were violent and used emotions and senses; moreover, the cult spread from a country that was hostile to Rome and from a city, Alexandria, which was superior to the Roman capital and therefore feared. In addition, the main social category of worshippers was the lower class which could easily be turned against the authorities under a religious pretext and this was another reason to reject the Egyptian cult. Though excluded from the capital, the Egyptian cults spread in Italy, Spain, Africa, Gallia and in the Danubian territories¹¹⁶.

However, Tiberius gave the order to build the temple in honour of Isis in 38 and since then the Egyptian cults constantly gained more power in the Roman world¹¹⁷. In 215 Caracalla built two more temples in Rome; in the beginning of the 3rd century the cult of the Egyptian gods reached its climax. Though Christianity gained absolute power, towards the end of the 4th century the processions of Isis's cult were still performed in Rome but the adoration of Egyptian gods was ended during the reign of Justinian when paganism was actively suppressed¹¹⁸.

As far as the rituals are concerned, they all began with a purification through abstinence and body cleaning, which was a way of changing the state of mind into one more receptive to the ritual and its effects. This purification of the body evolved in the beginning of the 2nd century to a purification of the soul and it was considered that the only way to know the deity was through chastity and virtue¹¹⁹.

An element that attracted worshippers was also the architecture of the Egyptian temples, which were different than the Greek and Roman ones. The Egyptian temple was isolated from the outer world through its own site. For example, the *Iseum* from Pompeii¹²⁰ had a *peribolos* which was doubled by a roofed portico that communicated with the street through a narrow gate located in the northern corner. In Rome, the

¹¹⁶ Turcan R., 1998, 104-106; Cumont F., 2008, p. 87-88; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 104.

¹¹⁷ Turcan R., 1998, 108-112; Cumont F., 89.

¹¹⁸ For more information concerning the spread of the Egyptian cults in the Roman provinces and their evolution, see Turcan R., 1998, p. 113-124; Cumont F., 2008, 89-90; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 104.

¹¹⁹ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 590; Cumont F., 2008, p. 95-96.

¹²⁰ The plan of the *Iseum* in Pompeii can be seen in Turcan R., 1998, p. 125.

*Iseum*¹²¹ and the *Serapeum* formed a distinctive architectural ensemble; the access to the inner courtyard was enabled through monumental gates, but the access to the temples was through narrow entrances. Besides the temples, the courtyard housed different buildings, which were used by the clergy or shelters for worshipers and pilgrims. In addition to this, the rituals themselves required specific spaces¹²².

During the Roman Empire, the clergy was formed according to the Egyptian traditions and it had its own social distinctions and customs; moreover, being a priest of the Egyptian gods was a permanent job. The service had to be performed daily in order to ensure the eternity of the gods: they had to be fed, dresses and worshiped¹²³.

The Egyptian cults had two grand celebrations, one in the spring, the *Navigium Isidis* and one during autumn, the *Inventio Osiridis*.

After being interrupted during winter time, the navigation was opened on the 5th of March and it was dedicated to Isis as she was the protector of sailors. The masked and costumed people, the women dressed in white, singers and musicians, the initiated ones, the priests wearing symbolic attributes, the representations of the gods and the worshippers would head to the port. Here awaited a new ship decorated with Egyptian symbols; after the ritual was completed, the ship was officially launched in the sea waters¹²⁴.

The grand annual celebrations of the Egyptian cults were held between the 28th of October and the 3rd of November, a period during which the main myth was reiterated¹²⁵: Osiris exited the temple and was killed by Seth; his death was celebrated with funeral lamentations, *Hathyr*, and his body was buried according to the rituals; Isis searched the parts of Osiris' body, discovered them and rebuilt it – this day was called *Inventio*; Horus defeated Seth and then Osiris entered the temple after regaining his life. An explosion of joy invaded the streets and temples. This last day of joy was called *Hilaria*, the same as in the celebrations of Cybele and Attis¹²⁶.

¹²¹ The plan of the *Iseum* in Rome is reproduced in Turcan R., 1998, p. 128.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 124-126.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 126- 127; 131-132; for a detailed description of this daily service, see Cumont F., 2008, p. 98-100.

¹²⁴ Turcan R., 1998, p. 136-137; Cumont F., 2008, p. 100-101; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 104-105.

¹²⁵ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 588; Cumont F., 2008, p. 101.

¹²⁶ Turcan R, 1998, p. 137-138; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 217.

This religious celebration of the dead and resurrected god transformed him into a deity of vegetation and fertility and his rebirth assured good harvest¹²⁷. In addition, it influenced the conceptions concerning death: the destiny of Osiris became the prototype of the human destiny. Through the initiation process, the neophyte or the initiate was reborn to a new life in which he became equal to the gods. After death, if he had followed the rituals and the religious norms prescribed by the priests and if he had honoured the gods, he would be blessed to live in the underground kingdom of Osiris-Serapis as he lived on earth. The Egyptian eschatological doctrine conquered the Roman Empire: the followers hoped for an existence beyond the grave, in the underground world, where they would enjoy supreme happiness and a pure life¹²⁸.

Besides these two grand celebrations, the 24th of March was dedicated to the emergence of Harpocrates from mud on a lotus flower; on this day, the followers applied a potion on their faces as a cure for pain¹²⁹. Another important day in the calendar of the Egyptian cults was called *Serapia*, held in honour of Serapis on 25th of April, and it may have been the day of commemorating one of the god's temples in Rome¹³⁰. On the 12th of August, the ignition of the oil lamps was celebrated, a ceremony which corresponded to the celebration of Isis in Egypt¹³¹.

Ammon occupied an important position within the Egyptian pantheon, as his cult in Alexandria and many Roman artistic representations suggest. Greece adopted his attributes from the Egyptian model: both were associated with the ram, which is the sacred animal, and both were oracular deities. The Greeks rapidly adapted his iconography to suit their own taste; therefore, Ammon was assimilated with Zeus from whom he borrowed the Olympian and severe figure, the beard and the draped coat. The artistic works of art kept the image of the god with horns wrapped around his ears¹³².

Under the Greek influence, Ammon was worshipped in ancient cities where his cult was public, such as Sparta, Thebes and Piraeus. During the Roman Empire, Zeus Ammon became Jupiter Ammon and his cult was connected to the imperial one.

¹²⁷ Turcan R., 1998, p. 138.

¹²⁸ Cumont F., 2008, p. 102-103.

¹²⁹ Turcan R., 1998, p. 139.

¹³⁰ Turcan R., 1998, p. 139; Marienescu A.M., 2008, p. 137.

¹³¹ Turcan R., 1998, p. 139.

¹³² *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 591-592; Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

Moreover, he became the protector of the army and of certain military units. His cult is well certified in the empire by epigraphic evidence, artistic representations and different theophoric names. Connected with funeral practises and representations, the god kept his initial apotropaic and eschatological attributes. The cult of Ammon is present in the areas where the Egyptian cults, especially that of Isis, were popular¹³³.

2. Egyptian cults in Roman Dacia

2.1. Artistic representations and epigraphic monuments

The most popular Egyptian deities in Roman Dacia were Isis and Serapis, each appearing on 26 sculptural and epigraphic monuments (usually alone, sometimes together) either as the divine couple or with Harpocrates (the divine triad)¹³⁴. Ammon is depicted on architectural fragments, on votive monuments, as well as on funeral furniture and sculptural monuments because he was the protector of the tombs and of the afterlife, like Attis and Mên¹³⁵.

2.1.1. Serapis

There are two iconographic types of statues depicting Serapis: the god sitting on a throne, accompanied by Cerberus, and the standing Serapis. The first type seems to imitate the cult statue from the *Serapeum* in Alexandria; the image of the god is similar to the one of Hades-Pluto. The second type might follow the prototype of the cult statue from Memphis; this type has several variants, depending on the absence or presence of Cerberus or other divine attributes¹³⁶.

The artistic representations of Serapis were usually replicas of the statue from the temple in Alexandria; this image of the god was very popular in the Roman Empire.

¹³³ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 592-593; Husar A., 2003, p. 132-133.

¹³⁴ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 136; Petolescu C., 2000, p. 268; Husar A., 2003, p. 127-128.

¹³⁵ Husar A., 2003, p. 132.

¹³⁶ Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 80 with the bibliography.

Such representations were found in Potaissa, where two bronze figurines depict the Egyptian god, the type called *the sited Serapis of Bryaxis*¹³⁷.

In the first case, the throne of the god is missing; Serapis wears the *calathos* on his head, a long *chiton* with short sleeves over which he wears a *himation* that covers his thighs, his back and his right shoulder. His left arm is lifted and carries a round object, probably a sceptre. His legs rest on a small chair. The bronze statue dates from the 2nd century and it is in a mediocre state of conservation¹³⁸. The second statue (**Fig. II. 1**) is identical to the first one but it is smaller and its throne was preserved. The left arm is broken, but it was lifted and was probably holding the sceptre. The throne represents the Egyptian type, with four legs. The frontal legs are connected with the back ones in the inferior part by two bars. The backrest is made of a plaque decorated with two rows of square holes. The two upper sides of the backrest are symmetrically decorated with floral motifs. The seat part is undecorated; the legs are made of simple bars which are decorated on the visible side with floral motifs¹³⁹. A similar bronze statuette was discovered in Romula¹⁴⁰.

Serapis appears as a subject for sculptural representations, usually made of marble. A fragment of a marble figurine depicting the god¹⁴¹ and the god's head from an alabaster statuette¹⁴² were discovered in Sucidava¹⁴³. The image of Serapis also appears on a clay medallion from Apulum¹⁴⁴ and on one from Cristești¹⁴⁵; such medallions were used to decorate pies, baked for feasts and banquets¹⁴⁶.

Serapis was identified as *Invicto deo Serapidi* on an altar from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa¹⁴⁷, where another altar was dedicated to him by M. Luceius Felix, *procurator Augusti Daciae Apulensis*¹⁴⁸. The god's name appears written in Greek on a

¹³⁷ Alföldy-Găzdac Á., 2003, p. 168, 174; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 82.

¹³⁸ Alföldy-Găzdac Á., 2003, p. 174.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁴⁰ Petolescu C., 2007, p. 233.

¹⁴¹ Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

¹⁴² Petolescu C., 2007, p. 233.

¹⁴³ Tudor D., 1978, p. 390.

¹⁴⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 160; Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

¹⁴⁵ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 273.

¹⁴⁶ Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 157-158.

clay medallion from Alburnus Maior¹⁴⁹. Moreover, he appears on a dedication from Apulum made by C. Iulius Mitrobianus¹⁵⁰ and on two altars which are now lost:

*SERAPI/ AUG(usto)/ SACRUM/ TIB(erius) IULIUS/
FLACCINUS/ LEG(atus) AUG(usti)/ PR(o) PR(aetore)*¹⁵¹

and

*SERAPI[IDI]/ C(aius) COSCONIUS/ SABINIANUS/ P(rimus)
P(ilus) LEG(ionis) XIII G(eminae)/ FE(cit)*¹⁵²

2.1.2. Isis

The most common image of the Egyptian goddess was a standing figure wearing a *chiton* and the *himation* draped around her body, with a fringed shawl tied between her breasts. She wears her hair in long curls and the horns of Hathor encircling the solar disk, which are the attributes of power¹⁵³.

A number of artistic representations of Isis were discovered in Dacia. A bronze bust of the Egyptian goddess and several small objects with a votive character were revealed in Drobeta¹⁵⁴, a bronze statue in Porolissum¹⁵⁵ and two small statuettes depicting the goddess were discovered in Apulum¹⁵⁶. A terracotta figurine, representing the bust of Isis was discovered in Romula¹⁵⁷.

Isis appears in dedications with several attributes or epithets and sometimes her name is disguised under specific expressions. It has been considered that under the expressions *Dea regina* and *Placida regina* hides Isis, though it is possible to be other feminine deities. In dedications from Sucidava and Romula, Isis appears as *Dea placida*, which reflects the syncretism Isis-Hecate; in Apulum and Potaissa she is known as *Isis myriomina*, the goddess with one thousand names, expression that reflects the plurality

¹⁴⁹ Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

¹⁵⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 160; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 159.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 208.

¹⁵² Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹⁵³ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 588.

¹⁵⁴ Popescu M., 2004, p. 155, 201; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 233; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 141.

¹⁵⁵ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 114.

¹⁵⁶ Husar A., 2003, p. 131.

¹⁵⁷ Tudor D., 1978, p. 375; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 233.

of appearances and attributes¹⁵⁸ as well as the assimilation of other gods' attributes, such as Juno, Nemesis, Hecate¹⁵⁹. Two other dedications from Apulum were made by members of the *Legio XIII Geminae*¹⁶⁰.

Porolissum was probably an important religious centre of the Egyptian cults since several artistic representations of the gods were discovered in the territory of the city. A votive bronze statue of Isis was unearthed in a ritual pit belonging to the temple of Bel, which corresponds to the second phase of the construction of the temple. A clay statue depicts Isis and her child, the mother breastfeeding the young god¹⁶¹. A fragmented bronze statue of unusual size, depicting Apis the bull, was discovered in the same city¹⁶².

2.1.3. Harpocrates

Harpocrates is represented as a child in the Greek-Roman iconography. Born from a lotus flower, he is a naked, hairless child, making his distinctive gesture of putting his forefinger of his right hand to his mouth. Under the Greek influence, the representations of Harpocrates became similar to those of Eros: curly hair and a lotus flower or the double crown of the pharaohs on his head, a cornucopia in his left arm, sometimes wings or the quiver of Eros. Occasionally, the Egyptian god is depicted with the attributes of Dionysos, such as the crown of ivy or vine¹⁶³.

A bronze statue depicting Harpocrates was discovered in Potaissa¹⁶⁴ and another one was revealed in a ritual pit belonging to the temple of Bel from Porolissum; the god is represented as a nude child sitting on a circular pedestal and holding a goose; his right hand forces the goose's beak to remain closed as a symbol of silence¹⁶⁵.

¹⁵⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 160; Husar A., 2003, p. 129; Popescu M., 2004, p. 153-154; Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

¹⁵⁹ Popescu M., 2004, p. 153.

¹⁶⁰ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 114.

¹⁶¹ Gudea N., 2003, p. 225; Popescu M., 2004, p. 155; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 68.

¹⁶² Gudea N., 1986, p. 100-101.

¹⁶³ *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, 1994, p. 590.

¹⁶⁴ Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 82.

¹⁶⁵ Gudea N., 1986, p. 100-101; *Ibid.*, 2003, p. 225; Popescu M., 2004, p. 155; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 68.

2.1.4. The Egyptian divine couple and the triad

The divine couple, in which the solar-masculine and the lunar-feminine principles are combined, appears on a dedication of L. Aemilius Carus, *legatus Augusti III Daciarum*, discovered in Apulum, among a list of other deities – *Serapis, Jupiter, Sol, Isis, Luna* and *Diana* – which may reflect an individual pantheon¹⁶⁶.

SERAPIDI/ IOVI SOLI/ ISIDI LUNAE/ DIANA/ DIS
DEABUSQ(ue)/ CONSERVATORIB(us)/ L(UCIUS)/ AEMol(ius)
CARUS/ LEG(atus) AUG(usti) PR(o) PR(aetore)/ III
DACIARUM¹⁶⁷

Another interpretation could reflect the religious syncretism, with Serapis and Isis as the supreme gods or the supreme couple which reflects the dual solar-lunar principle, because Jupiter and Sol are assimilated with Serapis and Luna and Diana with Isis¹⁶⁸.

An altar or a statue base was also dedicated to Serapis and Isis by Lucius Iunius Rufinus of *Legio XIII Geminae*, which was revealed in the area of the *praetorium* in Apulum¹⁶⁹.

The two Egyptian gods also appear on an altar from Potaissa, dedicated by C. Iulius Antigonus, centurion of *Legio V Macedonica*, and his wife, Flavia Apollinaria (their names might indicate their Greek origin¹⁷⁰), as well as on one from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa made by M. Statius Priscus, *legatus Augusti* of Dacia Superior in 157-158¹⁷¹.

The bronze fragment depicting Isis, Harpocrates and Serapis is relatively rare in the Empire and the only one discovered so far in Dacia. The fragment was found in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa and dates from the second half of the 3rd century (**Fig. II. 2**). The deities are represented on a simple pedestal. Isis and Serapis wear the same typical clothes: the long *chiton* with a *himation* that covers the inferior part of the body and the left arm. Isis has long hair that falls on her shoulders and wears the crescent on

¹⁶⁶ Husar A., 2003, p. 128; Ștefănescu-Onițiu, A., 2009, p. 82.

¹⁶⁷ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 215.

¹⁶⁸ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 146-147, 150; Popescu M., 2004, p. 153; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 114.

¹⁶⁹ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 204.

¹⁷⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 216; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 82; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 114.

¹⁷¹ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 149.

her head. The left arm is close to her body and holds a palm leaf. The other arm is raised to her shoulder and holds a hair strand in her hand. Harpocrates is represented as a naked child with his left arm around a snake that is coiled on a tree and his right finger pointing to his mouth, which is specific to the iconography of the god. He wears the double crown of Egypt on his head. The bearded Serapis wears a *calathos* on his head and a *patera* (a dish used in rituals) in his right hand which is connected to Harpocrates. The left arm is missing. The fragment dates from the 2nd century; it is in a mediocre state of conservation and has no analogies in metalworking¹⁷².

The Egyptian triad appears on a fragment of a marble votive plaque from Sucidava, which dates from the middle or the second half of the 3rd century. The details of the middle figure, that of Harpocrates, are well preserved: the whole figure of the god is depicted, as well as his attributes, the *cornucopia* in his left hand, his right hand to his mouth and the lotus flower on his head. Though not entirely preserved, Serapis is represented in the right side of the fragment, sitting on the throne and dressed in his traditional clothes; his sceptre is in his left hand. The figure of Isis is very mutilated and only the inferior part of her body survived¹⁷³.

The Egyptian gods were also depicted on engraved gems, which were important pieces of art in the ancient world. The style of representation was specific for the Hellenistic gem engraving which was adopted by the Roman art¹⁷⁴. An engraved gem decorated with the busts of Isis and Serapis was discovered in Romula and it is part of a larger collection of such gems from the History Museum in Caracal. On brick-red jasper the profile of the two gods appear oriented to the right. The attributes of each god are represented on the gem, such as the *calathos* on Serapis' head and on Isis' head a poppy bulb and two small antlers. The engraving is quite accurate¹⁷⁵ (**Fig. II. 3.**).

In Dacia, Serapis appears on four engraved gems, while Isis and Harpocrates are depicted only on one engraved gem each¹⁷⁶. For example, Serapis' bust is depicted on a gem from Potaissa, discovered in the *Thermae*. The profile looks to the left; he wears a

¹⁷² Alföldy-Găzdac Á., 2003, p. 168; 175-176.

¹⁷³ Tudor D., 1978, p. 372, 375, 390; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 231-233.

¹⁷⁴ Tudor D., 1967, p. 213; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 116.

¹⁷⁵ Tudor D., 1967, p. 213; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 651. The engraved gem from Romula is only mentioned by Tudor D., 1978, p. 390 and Petolescu C., 2007, p. 233.

¹⁷⁶ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 113.

chiton, his beard and hair are revealed in details, while his *calathos* is decorated with vertical incisions¹⁷⁷. The fact that this gem was unearthed in the *thermae* point to the attribute of healing of the Egyptian god, which is also confirmed by the discovery of a limestone statue close to the *Thermae*, from which only the head of Serapis was preserved, dating from the 3rd century¹⁷⁸. Serapis is also depicted on an engraved gem from Porolissum¹⁷⁹.

2.1.5. Ammon

Ammon became known in the Roman Empire as Jupiter Ammon and was depicted as a bearded man with ram horns, sometimes with a pine cone on his head; he usually appears on funeral monuments, often between two lions, as a protector of tombs¹⁸⁰. In Dacia, his cult came with the colonists from Egypt or Libya, though this fact is just a supposition since there are no epigraphic monuments of his cult which makes it impossible to determine the origin of his worshippers¹⁸¹.

The representations of the Jupiter Ammon in Dacia mostly have a funeral character. There are, however, a few exceptions discovered in Potaissa (a stone-made head of the god¹⁸² and a bronze statuette)¹⁸³ and in Târgu-Mureș (a bronze statue)¹⁸⁴. His image is depicted on approximately 20 funeral monuments, discovered in Apulum, Micia, Napoca, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa and others, on which he is shown in the company of other funeral motifs, such as lions, the Medusa, dolphins and seahorses¹⁸⁵.

A fragment of a base that belonged to a funeral monument depicting the head of Jupiter Ammon was discovered at Apulum. The pedestal was broken in two parts. Though it is poorly preserved, on the first fragment the details of the god's head can be depicted: a bearded face with a slightly domed forehead, bordered by dense short hair,

¹⁷⁷ Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 81; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 97, 114, 261.

¹⁷⁸ Husar A., 2003, p. 130-131; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 78-80, 210; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 97, 114.

¹⁷⁹ Gudea N., 1986, p. 101.

¹⁸⁰ Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

¹⁸¹ Popa A., 1967, p. 154.

¹⁸² Popescu M., 2004, p. 156, 209.

¹⁸³ Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 82.

¹⁸⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 272.

¹⁸⁵ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 189; Husar A., 2003, p. 133.

with horns wrapped around the ears, short nose and small mouth. The accuracy of execution of these details reveals the fine skills of the artist. The second fragment depicts a lion, with its body oriented to the right. Only some details were preserved, such as the mane around its head and chest, the left eye and the mouth. The inferior parts of the pedestal were destroyed, probably in order to be reused¹⁸⁶.

Jupiter Ammon is depicted on another fragment of a funeral monument, made of limestone, which was revealed in Sebeş. The images of a bull's head, the head of Jupiter Ammon, a second bull's head and a garland made of leaves and flowers can be depicted from left to right. The heads of the two bulls have a *taenia* on their forehead, which points to the sacrificial nature of the animal. The head of the Egyptian god follows the usual iconography, as mentioned in the analysis of the previous monument. The details are schematically rendered. Alexandru Popa considered that it was made in Apulum and later on brought to Sebeş as a construction material¹⁸⁷.

Another limestone pedestal belonging to a funeral monument was discovered in Napoca. It is in a bad state of conservation, but the images of Jupiter Ammon's head framed by two funeral lions on his right and left sides can be distinguished. The quality of this work is good and similar to other works¹⁸⁸.

From Micia comes another fragment of a funeral monument on which the human mask of Jupiter Ammon is associated with two dolphins and two funeral lions. These images are placed within a rectangular frame. The dolphins are depicted on the upper lateral sides and the lions border the image of the god; under their front paws lies a ram's head¹⁸⁹. Another pedestal of a funeral monument comes, most probably, from this ancient city. In this case, Jupiter Ammon is associated with Medusa. On one of the sides of the monument was represented the human mask of the Egyptian god with the forehead framed by the two horns; the details of the face are mostly destroyed, but the strands of hair parted on the forehead, the short curly beard and the big eyes can be distinguished. The face of the Medusa is represented on the opposite side, though it is

¹⁸⁶ Popa A., 1967, p. 150.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150-151.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151-153.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153-154.

partially mutilated: she has long wavy hair with beautiful curls and big eyes, thus her figure is humanized. Dolphins were depicted on the lateral sides of the monument¹⁹⁰.

A similar base of a funeral monument was discovered in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa or Micia. The monument is decorated on all its sides. On the lateral sides a rectangular frame with the images of a fish and a dolphin are rendered. The image of Jupiter Ammon framed by the two lions is present on one of the two main sides of the monument. On the other main side and between the two lions, which are identical with the previous ones, a female bust is represented, though in a bad preservation state¹⁹¹ (Fig. II. 4).

2.2. Cult edifices

2.2.1. Archaeologically investigated

A temple of Serapis was discovered in 1979 in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The temple is located in a complex of *intra muros* religious constructions, in the northern part of the ancient city. The archaeological discoveries from this area might point to the existence of a temple. Several inscriptions dedicated to Serapis were revealed close to a rectangular building with a fountain near it, located south of the *area sacra*, which may be a *Serapeum*¹⁹² (Fig. II. 5. and Fig. II. 6.).

2.2.2. Epigraphic evidence of edifices

The altar that it is supposed to have been discovered in Micia was dedicated to Isis by Varenus Pudens, *praefectus* of *II Flavia Commagenorum* cohort, and Domitia, probably his wife. The inscription mentions the construction of a temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess; the cult edifice was built at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century¹⁹³.

¹⁹⁰ Petolescu C., 1973, p. 737-740.

¹⁹¹ Popa A., 1967, p. 154.

¹⁹² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 90; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 90-92.

¹⁹³ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 125; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 140; Nemeti S., 2004, p. 42; Pop C., 2006-2007, p. 71; Macrea M., 2007, p. 320; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 137.

*Isidi ex vo/ to temp[lum]/ fecit D[o]/ mitia [Va]/ renii [Pude]ntis [Serva?] vettia/ etc.*¹⁹⁴

The great number of artistic representations and altars indicate the presence of the Egyptian cult and of a temple dedicated to Isis in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The foundation flagstone was made by M. Cominius Quintus, apparently an important figure in the administration and religion of the city. In the inscription appears the deity *Dea Regina* who can be identified with Juno, Isis or Nemesis, but it seems to be Isis because Nemesis is mentioned in another inscription for the foundation of her temple and Juno was worshipped in another temple in Ulpia Traiana¹⁹⁵.

*Deae [Re]ginae/ M(arcus) Com(inius) Q[u]intus eq(uo)
P(ublico)/ Pon(tifex) et Q(uin) Q(uennalis) col(oniae) et
Anto(nia) Valentina eius/ pro salute Claudi/ Ae Valentinae/
templ(um) a solo fecereunt*¹⁹⁶

2.2.3. Possible locations of religious edifices

A possible location of a temple is indicated by the presence of a *collegium Isidis* in Potaissa. The inscription was dedicated to the goddess by C. Iulius Martialis and L. Livius Victorianus, both being included in the *collegium*, the former as *pater* and the second as *quaestor*. It is known that an Egyptian temple was actually a complex of buildings in which a religious *collegium* functioned as well. The location of the temple seems to have been on the hill where the legion of the city had its headquarters, though an exact location of the edifice cannot be identified due to the agricultural work in the area¹⁹⁷.

Moreover, a standard peak or a tip of a bronze sceptre depicting a sphinx was also discovered in Potaissa. The inscription reads: Ἰαώ Ἰαώ Τιθιέ Ρέ-Ἀρμαχη that is *Iao, Iao, Tithoes, Re-Harmachis*. The *nomina sacra* *Tithoes, Re* and *Harmachis* point to different facets of the Sun: *Tithoes* is an Egyptian solar deity adored under the shape of a

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 177.

¹⁹⁵ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 140; Macrea M., 2007, p. 320.

¹⁹⁶ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 177.

¹⁹⁷ Petolescu C., 2000, p. 261; Popescu M., 2004, p. 189; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 83, 91.

sphinx, *Re* is the disk of the Sun-god and *Harmachis* is the morning Sun-god. The combination of these *nomina sacra* with the ritual invocation *Iao* can only point to the syncretism of different religious beliefs in Egypt, especially the Semite and Greek ones¹⁹⁸. Other discoveries that support the idea of a temple in Potaissa were the small obelisk covered with Egyptian hieroglyphs and the relief depicting the bull Apis whose name was written with Greek characters¹⁹⁹.

The inscriptions and the numerous artistic representations of Egyptian gods from this ancient city indicate that Potaissa was one of the main religious centres of the Egyptian cults²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁸ Husar A., 2003, p. 129-130; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 83.

¹⁹⁹ Petolescu C., 2002, p. 228; Husar A., 2003, p. 131; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 83-84.

²⁰⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 215; Husar A., 2003, p. 129-130; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 81-83.

Annexe II

Fig. II. 1. Serapis sitting on a throne, Potaissa, cf. Alföldy-Gázdac Á., 2003, p. 156, Pl. 5.



1. Serapis without throne - front view
2. Serapis without throne - back view
3. Serapis on the throne - right side view
4. Throne of Serapis - back view
5. Serapis on the throne - front view

Fig. II. 2. Isis, Harpocrates and Serapis from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa cf. Alföldy-Găzdac Á., 2003, p. 155, Pl. 4/ 4-5, front and back view.

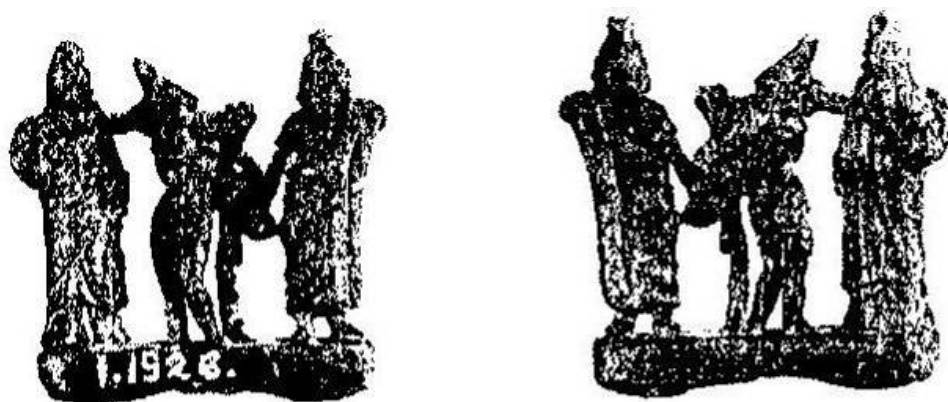


Fig. II. 3. Isis and Serapis on an engraved gem from Romula cf. Tudor D., 1967, p. 212, Fig. 2/10.



Fig. II. 4. Funeral monument from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa or Micia cf. Popa A., 1967, p. 155, Fig. 6.

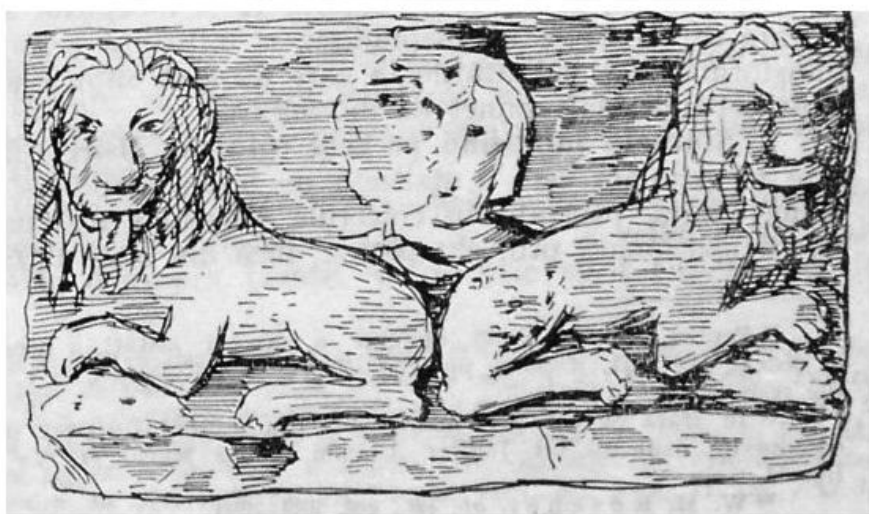
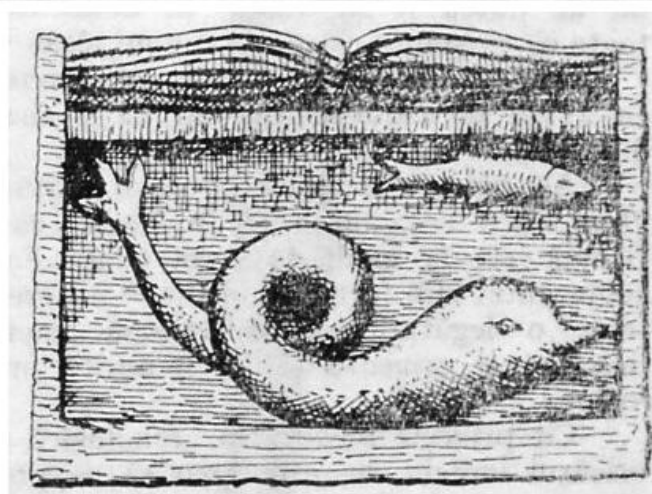
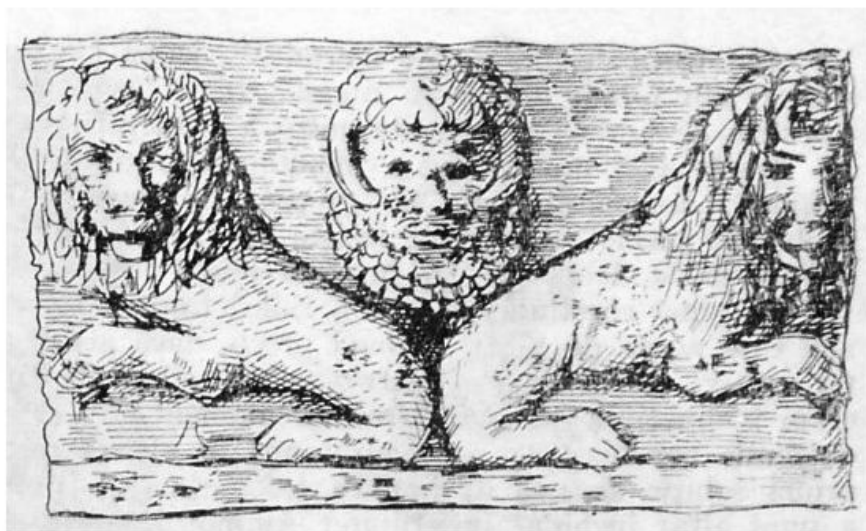


Fig. II. 5. *Horreum* and *area sacra* in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, monument S is the temple of Serapis cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 91, Planşa XXVIII.

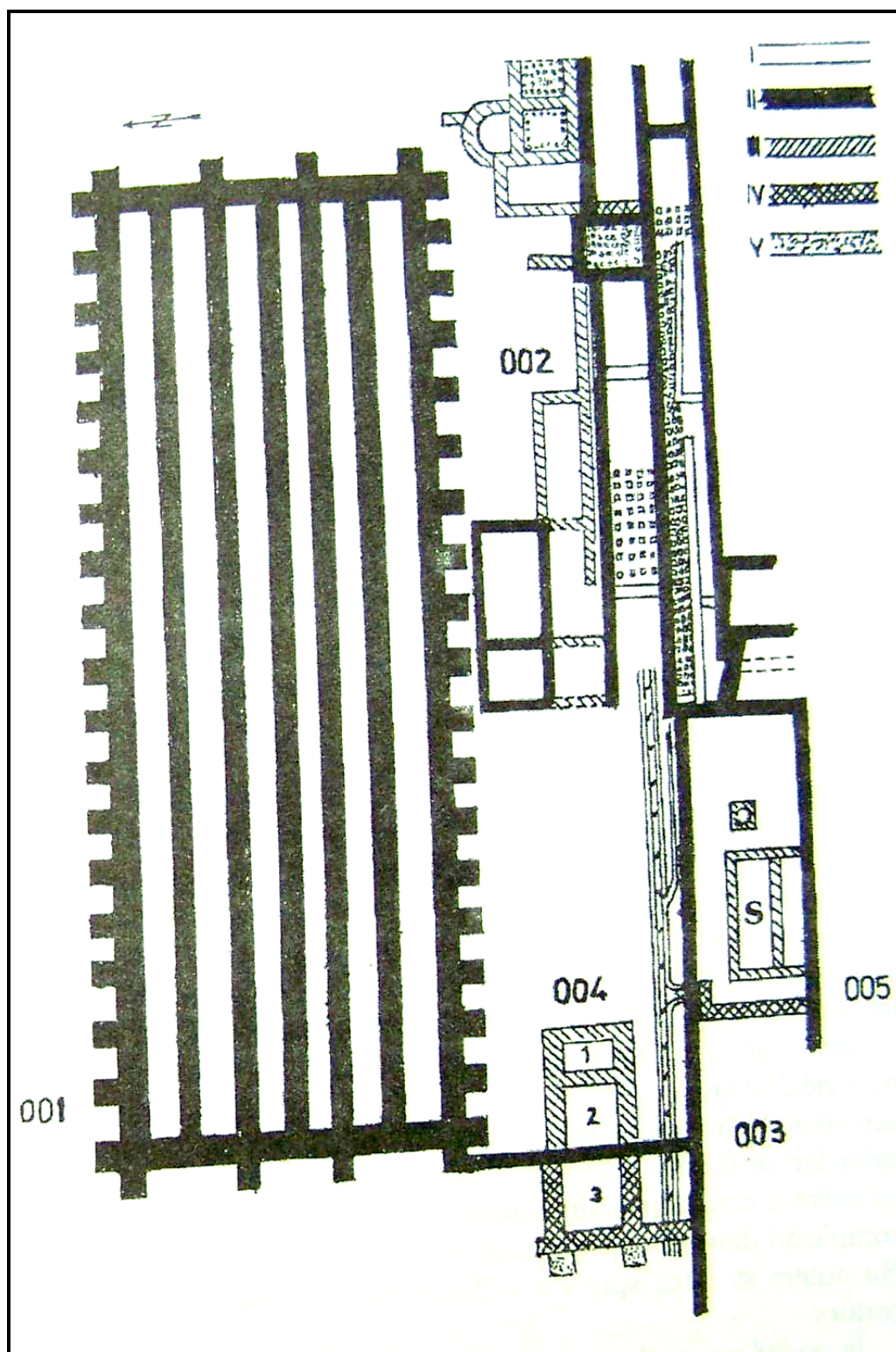


Fig. II. 6. Current view of the temple of Serapis in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, Fig. 19.



III. SYRIAN CULTS

It is difficult to analyse the evolution of the Syrian cults within the Roman Empire because they never reached the level of cohesion of other oriental cults and because of the lack of information regarding their features, doctrine and rituals. The oriental deities worshipped in the Roman territories were brought from Syria, where different regions had their own local gods; the spread of their cults in the Empire was uneven. Moreover, several Syrian deities were assimilated with the Roman supreme god, Jupiter, during in the process of religious syncretism. The list of the main Syrian deities worshipped in Dacia include Dea Syria, Azizos, Sol, Deus Aeternus and the syncretic gods Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Hierapolitanus and Jupiter Heliopolitanus.

Several deities originating from Palmyra were included under the general phase “Syrian cults”, such as Bêl, Malachbêl, Iarhibol, because they form a distinctive category within the Syrian cults, since they have their own specific features.

1. Characteristics and dissemination of the Syrian cults

The Syrian cults never reached the high level of unity and popularity of those coming from Asia Minor or Egypt because their worshippers arrived in the Roman Empire in several waves, each time bringing with them their national gods. Due to the lack of information regarding the presence of these cults within the Roman Empire, their features, doctrine and rituals still remain a mystery²⁰¹. The main protagonists for the dissemination of the Syrian cults within the Roman Empire were the slaves, the merchants and the military units of Syrian origin who were brought in the Roman territories after the conquering of their lands²⁰².

The slaves of Syrian origin were the main social category of worshippers that contributed to the spread of their national cults. In the 2nd century BC, Delos was an

²⁰¹ Turcan R., 1998, p. 154; Cumont F., 2008, p. 105.

²⁰² Sanie S., 1981, p. 19-20, 25.

important market for selling slaves captured during military campaigns. From here they reached different territories of the Roman state and wherever they went their national gods followed, along with the itinerant priests²⁰³.

Merchants played an active role in the spread of their cults. In the Imperial period, the *Syri negotiatores* were settled in territories where they had a chance to make profit, such as Asia Minor, Macedonia and Piraeus²⁰⁴. From here they reached Spain, Gallia, the Adriatic coasts, Dacia and Africa²⁰⁵. Once new territories were incorporated into the Empire, such as small kingdoms close to Orontes River, Commagene, Chalcis and Emesa, Damascus and Palmyra, the commerce developed rapidly and the new network of roads encouraged the exchange not only of products, but as well of people and religious cults²⁰⁶.

In addition, in these new territories the Empire were found local people suitable for military service; the legions and auxiliary troops of archers, infantrymen and horsemen were sent on the borders of Africa and Europe. No matter of the region they reached, the Syrian soldiers kept their national beliefs and gods, especially the *dii militares*, a fact which is confirmed by numerous inscriptions discovered in Roman provinces²⁰⁷. The classical pantheon of the Roman Empire failed to satisfy the spiritual needs of these worshippers. Consequently, in the 3rd century, the Syrian cults became popular among the higher social classes. In 218, the emperor Elagabalus, half Syrian and priest of Baal from Emesa, wanted to make his god the supreme deity of the Empire. Another Syrian deity, Sol Invictus, became the supreme deity during Aurelian's reign²⁰⁸.

The oriental cults moved the current from a civic faith to a personal one and this fact ensured their popularity, along with several characteristics. Among the Syrian cults, the purity of the body and the purity of the soul had the absolute value. There was a constant preoccupation of maintaining the state of purity or of perfection, which was also the attribute of their gods²⁰⁹. The Syrian deities were supreme rulers of the universe and of the stars. The Syrian god resides in the highest region of the world where he has

²⁰³ Turcan R., 1998, p. 157; Cumont F., 2008, p. 107.

²⁰⁴ Sanie S., 1981, p. 27; Cumont F., 2008, p. 109.

²⁰⁵ Turcan R., 1998, p. 152; Cumont F., 2008, p. 109.

²⁰⁶ Cumont F., 2008, p. 112.

²⁰⁷ Sanie S., 1981, p. 27; Turcan R., 1998, p. 152; Cumont F., 2008, p. 113.

²⁰⁸ Husar A., 2003, p. 115; Cumont F., 2008, p. 116.

²⁰⁹ Cumont F., 2008, p. 122.

the attribute of eternity and universality²¹⁰. In general, the Syrian god was a solar deity with absolute power and unlimited influence over the human destiny. The attribute of eternity made him the ruler of time, as well as of space, and that of immortality gave him the epithet *Invictus*, meaning the undefeated²¹¹. Syria influenced the beliefs regarding the pagan deity in the Roman Empire: a supreme and unique deity, powerful and eternal that lives in the sky and manifests itself in all living creatures, that governs the human destiny and saves the souls of the faithful ones²¹².

The first Syrian deity that reached the Italy was Atagartis and her husband, Hadad. She was known as *Συρία Θεά* in the Greek world and in the Empire as *Dea Syria*, according to the epigraphic evidence²¹³. Her cult was present in Dalmatia, Moesia Inferior, Pannonia, Britannia and Dacia²¹⁴.

Another popular cult among military units in the 2nd and the 3rd centuries was that of Jupiter Dolichenus, who received his name after a small city in Commagene. The city of Doliche lies at the crossroads of important commercial and military routes; therefore, the geographical position of this city influenced decisively the spread of its cult. His worshippers reached most of the Roman provinces²¹⁵. Artistic representations discovered in the Roman Empire provide information related to the rituals and sacrifices. During the celebrations, after the ritual of purification, the priest sacrificed a bull and its meat was consumed in order to acquire strength and power of the sacrificed animal. The bull's head or skull became a symbol in the iconography of Jupiter Dolichenus²¹⁶.

The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus reached Rome in the middle of the 2nd century, when a temple in his honour was built on the Aventine and a sanctuary on Equilinus at the end of the same century. His cult was popular in Italy especially in the areas of the harbours, on the frontiers of Africa, Britannia and of the Danubian provinces – Pannonia, Moesia and Dacia²¹⁷.

²¹⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 24; Cumont R., 2008, 129.

²¹¹ Cumont F., 2008., p. 130.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

²¹³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 106; Cumont F., 2008, p. 105-106.

²¹⁴ Sanie S., 1981, p. 108; Turcan R., 1998, p. 164.

²¹⁵ Sanie S., 1981, p. 36; Turcan R., 1998, p. 183-184; Husar A., 2003, p. 112; Cumont F., 2008, p. 114.

²¹⁶ Turcan R., 1998, p. 190.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1998, p. 192-193.

Another syncretic god was Jupiter Heliopolitanus, coming, as its name suggests, from the city of Heliopolis and known before the Roman conquest as Baalbek. He was part of a Capitoline triad, along with Atargatis, adored as *Venus Heliopolitana*, and a local deity worshipped as *Mercurius*²¹⁸. Jupiter Heliopolitanus was the god of the storms and the sky which, through rain, assures the fertility of the lands. His celestial attribute is suggested by the presence of the eagle, his sacred bird, and of lightning bolts (also the symbols of the Roman Jupiter)²¹⁹. He is usually depicted as the supreme ruler, wearing the imperial armour and this attribute was used as a support for the imperial cult²²⁰. His cult spread from the city of Heliopolis to Egypt, Italy, Gallia, Pannonia and Dacia²²¹.

Hadad from Hierapolis was a god of water, an important element in his rituals, therefore, a god who assured the fertility of the fields. This god formed a triad with Atargatis and Semia, which was known in the Greek world, in Delos, at the end of the 2nd century BC. The artistic representations of Hadad were discovered in Hierapolis, Palmyra, Dura Europos and Rome²²².

Turmasgades was a deity of the heights, worshipped in a few territories of the Roman Empire. Known as *Jupiter Turmasgades*, his symbol was the eagle, ruler of the sky, which points to the god's celestial character²²³. Identified with Jupiter, he was also god of war, of wild beasts and of hunting²²⁴.

Azizos is a solar deity coming from Emesa and Edessa; he was worshipped in the Roman Empire, especially by soldiers. In inscriptions, his name is usually followed by epithets, such as *puer bonus*, *puer conservator*, *puer invictus* and others, some being characteristic for other oriental gods. Azizos was identified with the Greek Phosphoros and with the Roman Lucifer; therefore, Azizos was the god of the morning star that precedes the sun and announces the arrival of light and life²²⁵. His cult was popular in Rome, Pannonia, Dalmatia and Dacia²²⁶.

²¹⁸ Sanie S., 1981, p. 91; Turcan R., 1998, p. 173.

²¹⁹ Turcan R., 1998, p. 174-175.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

²²¹ For more information on the dissemination of the cult of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in the Roman Empire see Turcan R., 1998, p. 179-183.

²²² Sanie S., 1981, p. 96-97.

²²³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 103; Husar A., 2003, p. 122; Tucan R., 1998, p. 198-199; Petoloscu C., 2007, p. 202.

²²⁴ Tudor D., 1971, p. 662.

²²⁵ Sanie S., 1981, p. 117; Turcan R., 1998, p. 211-212; Husar A., 2003, 120.

²²⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 121.

Deus Aeternus or simply Aeternus was also a celestial deity of oriental origin. His cult was spread in Hispania, Gallia, Italy, Mauretania, Pannonia, Moesia Inferior and Dacia starting with the 2nd century²²⁷. Deus Aeternus was the ruler of the sky and of eternity, therefore of time itself²²⁸. Since the epithet *Aeternus* is common also for other deities, such as Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Diana, Apollo, Luna, Sol and others, it is difficult to determine the origin and the character of Deus Aeternus²²⁹.

The cult of Sol Invictus was also spread in the provinces of the Roman Empire. There was already a cult of the sun in the Greek and Roman world as well, but it became popular when the oriental cults reached and spread within the Empire. The epithet *Invictus* suggests its oriental origin, even though it was common for other deities as well, such as Diana, Hercules, Dionysos, Mithra, Mên, Malagbel and Iarhibolus²³⁰. At Rome, the cult of the Sun was popular under emperor Elagabalus, an oriental according to his origin; he managed to merge the cult of Sol Invictus with that of the emperors; in addition, in 274 Aurelian transformed the cult of the Sun in a state religion²³¹.

A distinctive group of cults within the Syrian cults is formed by the ones coming from Palmyra since they have distinctive features. This city was favoured by its geographic position and this contributed at its development as a commercial and cultural centre. Moreover, it provided skilled military units for the Roman army which were sent to defend the borders of the empire; wherever they went, their national gods followed²³². The Palmyrian gods formed cosmic triads, as opposed to the Syrian family triads²³³. Their cults received Phoenician, Arab, Babylonian and Greek-Roman influences which enriched or altered their characteristics. The first Palmyrian triad dates from the beginning of the 1st century and it was composed of Bel, Iarhibol and Aglibol. These gods were considered to be *Dii patrii*²³⁴. Bêl had an Acadian origin and his original name was Bol; he was the absolute ruler of Cosmos and Time. Iarhibolus was a lunar god who was wearing the crescent on his shoulders; he was a god of vegetation and

²²⁷ Isac D., 1971, p. 537; Sanie S., 1981, p. 143-144.

²²⁸ Sanie S., 1981, p. 140-141.

²²⁹ Isac D., 1971, p. 540; Sanie S., 1981, p. 141.

²³⁰ Sanie, S., 1981, p. 124.

²³¹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 125; *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2005, vol. 1, p. 449.

²³² Sanie S., 1981, p. 25; Turcan R., 1998, p. 199.

²³³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 25.

²³⁴ Sanie S., 1981, p. 172; Turcan R., 1998, p. 199; Husar A., 2003, p. 124.

fertility as well. Malachbel or Malakbel, the messenger of the gods, was part of another triad, along with Baalshamin and Aglibol²³⁵.

2. Syrian cults in Roman Dacia

2.1. Artistic representations and epigraphic monuments

The Syrian cults were introduced in Dacia mainly by merchants and soldiers of Syrian origin, as the numerous inscriptions seem to point. The merchants organized themselves in associations and played an active role in the worshipping of their national deities. Many troops of oriental soldiers were sent to defend the borders in Dacia, such as the Commagens, the Palmyrian and the Syrian. The Commagens were forming two units, *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* and *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* that were worshipping Baal from Doliche as Jupiter Dolichenus. The Palmyrians constituted several troops on Dacian territory, such as *Palmyreni sagittarii ex Syria*, *numerus Palmyrenorum O(ptatianensium)*, *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium* and *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium*. The Syrians formed only one military unit which is known from an inscription, *numerus Surorum sagittariorum*²³⁶.

2.1.1. Dea Syria

The artistic representations of Dea Syria are various and this point to the her multiple attributes and to those borrowed from Greek or Roman deities, such as Hera, Demeter, Venus, or from the oriental Cybele²³⁷, often being worshiped in the temples of *Magna Deum Mater*²³⁸; however, in Dacia no artistic representations of Dea Syria were discovered. She was worshipped in Romula, Micia, Porolisum, Napoca and Apulum as epigraphic evidence points.

In Romula, the pedestal of a clay statue was discovered, with an inscription dedicated to Atargatis in the Syrian language, for the benefit of Ragysbl (Ragysbel), who

²³⁵ Tucan R., 1998, p. 200-201.

²³⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 27-28.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²³⁸ Turcan R., 1998, p. 163.

was bearing a name of Syrian origin. The cult of the Syrian deity in Romula is also supported by the existence of Syrian military units there²³⁹.

The Syrian goddess was also worshipped in Micia, where two altars were discovered²⁴⁰. On the first one, the name Dea Syria appears and was made by M. Ulpius Phoebus, a Greek name common in the 2nd century. The second one is supposed to have been dedicated to the Syrian deity or to Isis. Scholars suggested that the first possibility could be supported by the presence of numerous Syrian elements in this city²⁴¹.

A priest of Dea Syria is mentioned by an inscription from Porolissum, a unique case in Roman Dacia. The worshipper, Aurelius Gaianus, had a common name for Syrian people. The altar may be dating from the first decades of the 3rd century²⁴².

*De(ae) Suri/ae Aur/ [Ga]ianus/ dec(urio) m(unicipii) P(orolissensis)/
sace(r)do[s]*²⁴³

A votive plaque with an inscription, dating from the beginning of the 3rd century, was discovered in Napoca, made by L. Marius Perpetuus²⁴⁴ and it might indicate that a temple was dedicated to Dea Syria in this city in 214 by two brothers²⁴⁵.

*Deae Syriae pro salu[te d.n. imp. Caes. M. Aur. Antonini Pii fel(icist)/
Aug. pa[rt]ma[x] brit. max. G[er]max. et Iuliae Domnae d.n.] et
castrorum senet[usque ac partriae curante? L(ucio) Mario]/ Perpetuo
[co. Dac. III...]/ Aureli Claudi Nepo[tiani?...] frates [empto loc(o)
[...]/ sive ab eis quos ipsi [...]/ D(ecreto) [d(ecuriorum?)]/ messal[la]
et Sabino co(n)s(ulibus)]*²⁴⁶

In Apulum, Flavius Barhadadi, a priest of Jupiter Dolichenus, dedicated an altar to *IOM Dolichenus* and *Deae Suriae Magnae Caelesti*. The epithets of Dea Syria point

²³⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 354; *Ibid.*, 1968b, p. 29; Sanie S., 1981, p. 112; Turcan R., 1998, p. 164; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 128; Macrea M., 2009, p. 317.

²⁴⁰ Turcan R., 1998, p. 164; Macrea M., 2009, p. 316.

²⁴¹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 125; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 163; Sanie S., 1998, p. 108-109; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 225; Macrea M., 2009, p. 317.

²⁴² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 248; Sanie S., 1981, p. 110; Macrea M., 2009, p. 316.

²⁴³ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 263.

²⁴⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 228; Sanie S., 1981, p. 110-111.

²⁴⁵ Husar A., 2003, p. 119; Macrea M., 2009, p. 316.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 263.

to the association between this deity and Cybele and Caelesti²⁴⁷. The worshipper was of Syrian origin, as his theophoric name means: “the son of god Hadad”²⁴⁸.

2.1.2. Jupiter Dolichenus

A stele from Zeztintepe, dating from the 1st century, depicts the Baal of Doliche dressed according to the Roman military fashion, wearing a crown with horns on his head, holding an axe (the *bipennis*) in one hand and a lightning bolt in the other, riding a bull. The god also appears standing, with a bull next to him, while his *paredra*, Juno Dolichena, is riding a deer. These scenes appear on two reliefs from Kurcoglu. The images of the gods, as they are depicted in the abovementioned material, became the model for representations in the Roman Empire in the 2nd century, when he was assimilated with Jupiter, from whom he received the eagle as a symbol²⁴⁹.

In Dacia, the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus was popular in several important cultural centres, such as Apulum, Ampelum, Potaissa, Tibiscum, Sucidava, and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, but also in their rural territories. He appears on more than 54 monuments, such as votive plaques and hands, statues and statuettes, reliefs and inscriptions²⁵⁰ (**Fig. III. 1**).

The typical Dolichenian hand was made of bronze and had the palm opened, with the fingers lifted, the thumb being detached from the other ones. The pieces found in Myszkov or Mișcov and Cătunele de Sus hold a globe, positioned between the thumb and the index finger, on which, probably, Victory was sitting²⁵¹. These hands represented the hand of the god performing a gesture of blessing and support; they were ritual symbols kept in temples or carried during processions²⁵². The votive hand from Myszkov was dedicated to the god by Gaius, *optio of cohors I Hispanorum milliaria*²⁵³.

²⁴⁷ Sanie S., 1981, p. 113; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 176-177; Husar A., 2003, p. 120; Macrea M., 2009, p. 316-317.

²⁴⁸ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 81.

²⁴⁹ Turcan R., 1998, p. 184-185.

²⁵⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 37; Husar A., 2003, p. 113; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 107.

²⁵¹ Turcan R., 1998, p. 189.

²⁵² Sanie S., 1981, p. 55; Turcan R., 1998, p. 189.

²⁵³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 55; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 227.

The exemplar from Cătunele de Sus is similar to the previous one, but has no inscription²⁵⁴.

Triangular plaques depicting Jupiter from Doliche were discovered in Dacia as well, such as the one from the camp at Potaissa²⁵⁵. The plaque was decorated using the *au repoussé* technique and only the upper part was preserved. An eagle is depicted close to the apex with its wings close to its body and the head turned to the left. The next register depicts the busts of Luna and Sol with their specific attributes and their presence is to be correlated with the attribute of eternity of Jupiter Dolichenus²⁵⁶.

A fragment of a bronze triangular plaque was discovered in Răcari, dating from the first half of the 3rd century. The middle part of the votive monument was preserved and it depicts the god and his *paredra*, though their images are severely damaged. The head, neck, right arm and the left hand were not preserved; he is wearing the military clothing and he is standing on the bull looking to the right, though the bull's body is smaller than that of the god. In front of the bull, the muzzle of an animal, probably a deer (the sacred animal of Juno Dolichena) can be depicted. Between the heads of the two animals there is an image of an altar with a flame on it, which could be the symbol of eternal fire or of a sacrifice²⁵⁷ (**Fig. III. 2.**).

A fragment from a marble statue of big dimensions was discovered in Drobeta. Only the head of the god was preserved. The god wears the Phrygian cap, has his hair arranged in curls and his moustache is united with the short beard. The fragment is incomplete, since it is damaged in the area of the right eye, nose and the cap²⁵⁸.

A marble statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered in Amărăștii de Sus, from which only the superior part was preserved. The god wears the Phrygian cap and the military costume. The curls of his hair frame his face and he has a straight nose, closed mouth, curved moustache and short beard parted on the middle. The inferior parts

²⁵⁴ Tudor D., 1961, p. 148; Sanie S., 1981, p. 72.

²⁵⁵ Sanie S., 1981, p. 52.

²⁵⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 68-69; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 122; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 260.

²⁵⁷ Tudor D., 1961, p. 145-147; *Ibid.*, 1968a, p. 310; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 647; Sanie S., 1981, p. 73; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 260.

²⁵⁸ Tudor D., 1961, p. 148; *Ibid.*, 1968a, p. 301; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 647; Sanie S., 1981, p. 72-73; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 247.

of the arms are missing, along with the specific attributes, the double axe and the lighting bolts²⁵⁹ (**Fig. III. 3.**).

A high relief made of marble depicting Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull was discovered in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. An eagle holding a crown in his beak stands on a branch on the right side of the god. The god wears the Phrygian cap and military clothing, having a sword and a dagger hanging from his *cingulum*. He holds a double axe in his right hand and lightning bolts in his left. The bull walks to the right and has its head turned to the viewer²⁶⁰. In the same city was discovered a bas-relief depicting goddess Victory with an eagle, the divine substitute, and it was one of the arguments of locating a *dolichenum*²⁶¹. In addition, a sculpture depicting an eagle with its wings spread standing on a deer's head is another votive monuments from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa; the pair eagle-deer represent the divine oriental couple, Jupiter and Juno from Doliche²⁶².

Bronze statues were discovered in Dacia as well. One was discovered in Ilișua and has a unique detail that is a crown with seven pointed knobs which represent the seven planets as a symbol of the universe, pointing to the cosmic character of the god²⁶³. A bronze statuette was found in Desa from which only the superior part was preserved. The image of the god is similar to that from Amărăștii de Sus. It is supposed that the statuette was fixed on a statuette representing the bull²⁶⁴ (**Fig. III. 4.**).

Two bronze statuettes were discovered in Porolissum. The representation of the god is similar to other ones: he is standing, probably on a bull which is now lost, wears the Phrygian cap and the military costume. His head is schematically rendered; it has narrow forehead, curly heard, beard and moustache, a pointed nose. The right arm is missing and the left one holds the lightning bolts. The figure is mediocre in terms of technique. Another statuette depicts the god in a similar way, though it is smaller and he

²⁵⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 337; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 647; Sanie S., 1981, p. 74.

²⁶⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 69.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 70-71.

²⁶³ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 266; Sanie S., 1981, p. 66-67; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 259.

²⁶⁴ Tudor D., 1961, p. 148; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 647; Sanie S., 1981, p. 75.

also wears a crown with sun rays²⁶⁵ (**Fig. III. 5**). Several fragments of statues and statuettes depicting Jupiter Dolichenus were discovered in his temple or close to it²⁶⁶.

The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is confirmed in Dacia by numerous inscriptions²⁶⁷ which were discovered in cultural centres, such Apulum (4 inscriptions)²⁶⁸, Ampelum (4)²⁶⁹, Micia (2)²⁷⁰, Napoca (2)²⁷¹, Potaissa (2)²⁷², Samum (3)²⁷³, Tibiscum (1)²⁷⁴, Sucidava (1 inscription which mentions the name of a woman, an unique case in Roman Dacia)²⁷⁵, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (2)²⁷⁶, as well as in other smaller settlements, such as Buciumi²⁷⁷, Certiae and Sîncrai (1 inscription in each)²⁷⁸. In Pojejena de Sus, one of the earliest epigraphic evidence of the cult dating from the second half of the 2nd century was discovered; it was made by Quintus Petronius Novatus, *praefectus cohortis V Gallorum*²⁷⁹; several fragments of statues depicting the god were also discovered there²⁸⁰.

2.1.3. Jupiter Heliopolitanus

There are no artistic representations of Jupiter Heliopolitanus discovered in Dacia; however, his cult is confirmed in the Danubian province by two altars with inscriptions found in Micia and a *titulus sacer* from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The worshippers were *centurions* of two legions²⁸¹. The two votive altars from Micia were dedicated by Q. Licinius Macrinus of *Legio IIII Flavia Felix* and L. Licinius Messalinus

²⁶⁵ Alföldy-Găzdac Á., 2003, p. 176-177

²⁶⁶ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 247-248.

²⁶⁷ For the text of the inscriptions dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus in Dacia, see Sanie S., 1981, p. 255-261.

²⁶⁸ Sanie S., 1981, p. 37.

²⁶⁹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 46-47; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 143.

²⁷⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 57-58.

²⁷¹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 228; Sanie S., 1981, p. 57.

²⁷² Bujor E., 1967, p. 189; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 215; Sanie S., 1981, p. 51-52.

²⁷³ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 261; Sanie S., 1981, p. 50-51.

²⁷⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 39; Sanie S., 1981, p. 60-61.

²⁷⁵ Tudor D., 1961, p. 148; *Ibid.*, 1968a, p. 331; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 648; Sanie S., 1981, p. 64.

²⁷⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 58-59.

²⁷⁷ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 254; Sanie S., 1981, p. 52.

²⁷⁸ Sanie S., 1981, p. 52-53

²⁷⁹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 61; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 228.

²⁸⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 65.

²⁸¹ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 82, 94.

of *Legio XIII Geminae*; the altars date from the first decades of the 2nd century²⁸². The *titulus sacer* was dedicated by C. Domitius Valens of *Legio XIII Geminae*; because of the bad state of conservation, this votive monument cannot be dated²⁸³.

2.1.4. Jupiter Hierapolitanus

Jupiter Hierapolitanus was known in Dacia in a city where the Syrian elements were relatively popular, that is in Micia. An inscribed altar and one without inscription were discovered 400 meters from the camp. The first one was dedicated to Jupiter Erapolitano by Casius Rufus²⁸⁴.

*Iovi Erap/ olitano / fecit Ca/ sius Ruf/ us votu/ m dedit*²⁸⁵

The word *Erapolitano* was considered to be another spelling of the city Hierapolitanus. The name of the worshipper suggests his oriental origin²⁸⁶. A few meters from the place where this altar was discovered, the construction materials of an edifice were revealed by archaeologists, such as roof tiles, fragments of columns and capitals. Taking into consideration the discovery of the two altars close to the edifice, it has been suggested that it was, in fact, a temple built in honour of this deity²⁸⁷.

2.1.5. Jupiter Turmasgades

Two altars with inscriptions from Micia and a sculptural group and a relief with inscription from Romula provide evidence of the cults of Jupiter Turmasgades in Roman Dacia, which can be correlated with the presence in these cities of two oriental military units, *cohors II Commagenorum* and *numerus Surorum Sagittariorum*²⁸⁸. The altars

²⁸² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 125; Sanie S., 1981, p. 91-92; Husar A., 2003, p. 123; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 236.

²⁸³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 93; Turcan R., 1998, p. 182; Husar A., 2003, p. 123.

²⁸⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 123; Sanie S., 1981, p. 95; Husar A., 2003, p. 123.

²⁸⁵ Sanie S., 1981, p. 262.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

²⁸⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 353; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 649; Sanie S., 1981, p. 102.

from Micia were dedicated to this Syrian god by Aurelius Dionisius and Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum, under the orders of Marcus Arruntius Agrippinus²⁸⁹:

*G(enio) T(ur)maz(gadae)/ Aure(lius) D/ionisiu/s cur(ator) pos(uit)*²⁹⁰

*[I]ovi Tur/mazgadi/ Coh(ors) II Fl(avia)/ [Co]mmag(enorum)
eq(uitata) s[ag(ittatoriorum)/ [cui] pr(aest) M(arcus) Arru([nt/iu)s
Agrippinu[s]/ v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*²⁹¹

A fragmentary marble relief with inscription was discovered in Romula. It depicts an eagle with its wings outstretched sitting on a deer, the eagle's victim that is fighting to escape. The eagle's head and upper body is missing. On the base of the relief there is an inscription in honor of *Turmasgada*²⁹².

*Turmasgada/ Max(imus) Maximinus et/ Iulianus Maximinus/ ex voto
pos(uerunt)*²⁹³

In the same city, a sculpture and a relief similar to the abovementioned one were also dedicated to Turmasgades, but these artistic representations have no inscription²⁹⁴.

2.1.6. Azizos

The cult of Azizos is confirmed in Dacia by several inscriptions and a temple in Potaissa (**Fig. III. 6**). The altars with inscriptions were discovered in areas where the oriental cults were popular, such as Apulum (9 inscriptions)²⁹⁵, Napoca, Suceanu and Potaissa (1 inscription each)²⁹⁶. In these inscriptions, the Syrian god appears as *Deus Azizus Bonus Puer Conservator*, *Bonus Deus Puer Phosphorus*, *deus Bonus Puer*

²⁸⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 125; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 649; Sanie S., 1981, p. 100-101; Petoloscu C., 2007, p. 201.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 262; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 226.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 354; *Ibid.*, 1968b, p. 30; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 648-649; Tudor D., 1971, p. 662; Sanie S., 1981, p. 101; Petoloscu C., 2007, p. 201.

²⁹³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 262.

²⁹⁴ Tudor D., 1971, p. 663; Sanie S., 1981, p. 101-102.

²⁹⁵ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 151; Sanie S., 1981, p. 119; Husar A., 2003, p. 121.

²⁹⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 119; Husar A., 2003, p. 121.

*Phosphorus, Bonus Puer Phosphorus, Puer Phosphorus, Puer Bonus or Bonus Puer*²⁹⁷. In two inscriptions from Apulum, *Bonus Puer* and *Apollo Pythius* are worshipped together since both deities had solar attributes²⁹⁸.

*Deo Bono/ Puero Pos/phoro Apol/lini Pythio T. Fl(avius) Titus et/ T. Fl(avius) Philetus/ p(ro) s(alute) s(ua) s(uorumque)*²⁹⁹

*Deo B(ono)/ Pos/phoro Apol/lini Pythio/ D. Iulius Ru/sonius cust(os) armorum/ pro salute sua et suorum/ v(oto) s(oluit) l(ibens) m(erito)*³⁰⁰

2.1.7. Deus Aeternus

Deus Aeternus was worshipped in Roman Dacia, a fact confirmed by more than 20 votive monuments dedicated to him, discovered in Apulum, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Micia, Ampelum, Germisara, Tibiscum and Sighișoara³⁰¹.

In Apulum, the god appears on ten inscriptions; on two of them Aeternus appears as an epithet of Jupiter Optimus Maximus; most of the worshippers have Roman names³⁰². According to one inscription, Ulpus Proculinus rebuilt the fountain of Deus Aeternus at the command of Apollo. Two women dedicated an altar each, in honour of their god, which is a rare case in Dacia³⁰³.

Four altars and two votive flagstones, all with inscriptions, were discovered in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa as well. *Jupiter Optimus Maximus Aeternus* appears on three altars, which were dedicated by Flavius Bellicus, Q. Atius Anthimus and T. Flavius Aper; the name of the god points to the phenomenon of religious syncretism between the Roman supreme god, Jupiter, and Aeternus³⁰⁴.

A unique case is the association of Deus Aeternus with Juno and *angelis* which appears on the altar dedicated by the Greek M. Procilius Aphrodisius, his wife, Seximia Hermione, and their daughter, Procilia. It is the only dedication discovered in the Roman

²⁹⁷ Sanie S., 1981, p. 119; Husar A., 2003, p. 121. For the catalog of inscriptions concerning the cult of Azizos, see Sanie S., 1981, p. 264-266.

²⁹⁸ Sanie S., 1981, p. 119; Turcan R., 1998, p. 212; Husar A., 2003, p. 121.

²⁹⁹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 265.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 140; Husar A., 2003, p. 116. For the catalog of inscriptions dedicated to Deus Aeternus, see Sanie S., 1981, p. 270-274.

³⁰² Sanie S., 1981, p. 144-145; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 155.

³⁰³ Isac D., 1971, p. 538-539; Sanie S., 1981, p. 146-147.

³⁰⁴ Sanie S., 1981, p. 147-148; Husar A., 2003, p. 116-117.

Empire in which the name of Aeternus appears along with that of Juno and the only one in which he is associated with *angeli*; moreover, the angels are not mentioned in any other dedication discovered in Dacia³⁰⁵. The mentioning of Juno may indicate an oriental goddess, *paredra* of Deus Aeternus, and that of *angeli* can point to the influences of the Judaic religion. Angels were the intermediary between the unique god who is inaccessible to humans but who communicated with them through messengers³⁰⁶.

*Deo Aeterno et Juno/ni et Angelis/ M. Procilius Aphodi/sius
Aug(ustalis) col(oniae) metropol(is)/ et Seximia Hermione/ et Procilia
filia/ colitoribus d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(osuerunt)*³⁰⁷

The inscriptions from Micia mention the association between Aeternus, Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Silvanus, which is not the only case in the Roman Empire³⁰⁸. *IOM Aeterno conservatori* appears on a dedication from Ampelum made by Callistus; these two epithets are common for other oriental deities³⁰⁹. Deus Aeternus appears on dedications from Germisara³¹⁰, Tibiscum³¹¹ and Sighișoara³¹².

A votive marble plaque discovered in Germisara depicts an eagle with outstretched wings holding a lightning bolt in his claws; the eagle is framed by a crown. On the inferior side there is an inscription in honour of Deus Aeternus. The eagle is present in other oriental monuments and it represents a celestial deity, while the crown is a symbol of victory and of immortality³¹³.

*C. Iul(ius) Tato D(eo)/Et[e]rno v(otum) p(osuit)*³¹⁴

³⁰⁵ Isac D., 1971, p. 539; Sanie S., 1981, p. 148.

³⁰⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 148-149; Petolescu C., 2000, p. 262.

³⁰⁷ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 272.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

³¹⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 133; Sanie S., 1981, p. 152.

³¹¹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 39; Sanie S., 1981, p. 152.

³¹² Sanie S., 1981, p. 154.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 153-154.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

2.1. 8. Sol Invictus

The cult of Sol Invictus was popular in Dacia in several areas where votive monuments, ceramic products and engraved gems were discovered (**Fig. III. 7.**). Ceramic moulds or medallions were discovered in Tibiscum, Ilişua, Romula and Locusteni. The mould from Tibiscum depicts Sol from a frontal view, wearing the crown of sunrays; the god is in a *quadriga*, holds a whip in his left hand and the globe in the other one; the horses are symmetrically arranged, two to the left of the quadriga and two to the right. The mould from Ilişua probably depicts the bust of Sol wearing the crown of sunrays. The ceramic medallions from Locusteni and Romula show Sol from the profile. On the exemplary from Romula, Sol is framed by the zodiac signs which symbolized the movement of the stars and put the Sun in the centre of the universe. A lamp also depicting the bust of Sol was discovered in Romula³¹⁵.

Sol in quadriga is also depicted on engraved gems, two discovered in Romula and one in Dierna. The artistic representations on the engraved gems from Romula are similar to those on the ceramic medallions from the same city, but also to that from Locusteni³¹⁶. On the first engraved gem Sol appears in quadriga which is moving to the right; the nude Sol is wearing the crown with seven sunrays and holds the reins in his right arm and the whip in his left. Two stars with seven rays each are placed above and below the horses and they symbolize Hesperus and Phosphorus³¹⁷. On the second engraved gem Sol is depicted in the same position, holding only the whip in his right arm; the left arm is lifted to the level of his head³¹⁸. The artistic representation of Sol on the engraved gem from Dierna is similar to the mould from Tibiscum³¹⁹.

Sol appears in several inscriptions discovered in Roman Dacia. In Apulum, he appears in seven votive monuments with inscriptions as *Soli*, *Soli invicto*, *Deo Soli* and *Invicto*. In two dedications from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa he appears as *Soli invicto*, as well as in one inscription from Păuleni and one from Germisara. He also appears as

³¹⁵ Sanie S., 1981, p. 128-129.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³¹⁷ Tudor D., 1967, p. 217; Sanie S., 1981, p. 129-130.

³¹⁸ Tudor D., 1967, p. 221; Sanie S., 1981, p. 130.

³¹⁹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 130.

Deo Soli invicto in Napoca, as *Deo Invicto* in Micia, as *Soli invicto* in Păuleni and Germisara, as *Soli* in Samum and as *Invicto* in Potaissa and Ceanu Mic³²⁰.

2.1. 9. Bêl

The Palmyrian god Bêl is known in Roman Dacia from two inscriptions discovered in Tibiscum and in Porolissum. He also appears on a dedication made to *Diis Patriis*, along with Malagbêl, Benefal and Manavat, discovered in the ruins of the temple of the Palmyrian gods in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa³²¹.

The altar with an inscription from Tibiscum was discovered in 1971; it was dedicated to Bêl by Aelius Zabdibol, an *armorum custos* of the *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* settled in this city. His name suggests his Palmyrian origin³²².

*Bel[o] deo Palmyr(eno)/ Ae[l(ius) Z]abdibol/ Ae[l(ius)?...]
a[rmor]um cus(tos)*³²³

The votive plaque discovered in Porolissum recorded the reconstruction of the temple of Bêl in the 3rd century after being destroyed by a fire³²⁴ (see *infra*). The epithet *deus patrius* emphasizes his national character and its importance within the pantheon of the *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium*³²⁵.

Bêl is associated with Malagbêl, Benefal and Manavat in the inscription from the votive flagstone discovered in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa.

*Diis Patriis/ Malagbel et Bebellaha/mon et Benefal et Mana/vat
P(ublius) Ael(ius) Theimes (duum) viral(is) col(oniae) templum fecit
solo et/ impendio suo pro se suisq(ue)/ omnibus ob pietate ipsorm/
circa se issus ab ipsis fecit/ et culinam subiunxit*³²⁶.

There was a difficulty with the interpretations of the names of the gods Bêl and Fenebal which appear in this inscription as Bebellahamon and Benefal. Silviu Sanie asserted that this spelling was the result of a metathesis. Another hypothesis supported by

³²⁰ For the catalog of inscriptions, see Sanie S., 1981, p. 226-270.

³²¹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 173; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 159.

³²² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 39; Sanie S., 1981, p. 174-175.

³²³ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 276.

³²⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 247; Gudea N., 1986, p. 102-103; Sanie S., 1981, p. 175; Husar A., 2003, p. 124.

³²⁵ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 247; Sanie S., 1981, p. 175.

³²⁶ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 277.

the same scholar was that, in fact, there are two names of two different gods comprised within the name Bebellahamon which are *Bel [et] Bel Ahammon*³²⁷.

2.1.10. Malachbêl

Malachbêl was a solar deity, also known for its attribute as a protector of plants and herds. In Dacia, his cult is confirmed by two inscriptions from Tibiscum and by five inscriptions from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa in which he appears alone and the other one, already mentioned, in which he appears with other Palmyrian deities³²⁸.

In the dedications from Tibiscum his name appears written in two different ways, *Malachbelo* and *Malagbelo*, both common in Roman provinces. In the dedications from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Malachbêl has different epithets, such as *Deo sancto Malagbelo* and *Deo Soli Malagbelo*. The epithet *sancto* is common for oriental deities and suggests the ritual and spiritual purity. *Soli* confirms the solar attributes of this Palmyrian god³²⁹.

2.1.11. Iarhibol

The name of this solar god is known in the territories of the Roman Empire with different spelling, such as *Hierobolus*, *Ierhabolus*, *Ierhibolus*, *Ierhobolus* and *Iorhobolus*. In Dacia, three votive altars were dedicated to him, two from Apulum and one from Tibiscum³³⁰. In the first inscription from Apulum, Iarhibol appears as *Deus Sol Hierobolus*³³¹, which confirms his solar character; the altar was dedicated by Aurelius Bassianus, of oriental origin according to his name, who is a decurio, but also a priest of Iarhibolus. Another priest, Aelius Nisa, a Palmyrian, dedicated an altar to *Deus Ierhobolus*. The presence of these two priests in Apulum suggests the existence of a community of worshippers and an organized cult, which could imply the presence of a

³²⁷ Sanie S., 1981, p. 178, 181.

³²⁸ Sanie S., 1981, p. 183; Husar A., 2003, p. 125. For the catalog of votive monuments with inscriptions dedicated to Malachbelus, see Sanie S., 1981, p. 277-278.

³²⁹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 184-186.

³³⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 193; Husar A., 2003, p. 125. For the catalog of votive monuments with inscriptions dedicated to Iarhibolus, see Sanie S., 1981, p. 276.

³³¹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 164.

cult edifice in this city³³². The solar character of the god is also confirmed by the altar with inscription from Tibiscum, where he appears as *Deus Sol Ierhabolus*; the altar dates from the beginning of the 3rd century³³³.

2.2. Cult edifices

2.2.1. Archaeologically investigated

A temple of Jupiter Maximus Optimus Dolichenus was discovered and investigated in Porolissum³³⁴; it was built on the first terrace under the Pomet Hill camp, close to its northern tower, in 240-244 and functioned until 253-255, when it was destroyed by fire. Next to the temple there is a *taberna* which was built at the same time. The temple had an irregular quadrilateral plan and two construction phases. During the first phase, the temple was made of wood with the entrance on the eastern side. Stone walls were added in the second phase and a transversal wall divided the interior into two chambers, one used for feasts and the other for sacrifices (**Fig. III. 8**). The inscription for IOM Dolichenus was made in honour of emperor Marcus Antonius Gordianus and *cohors III Campestris* and was discovered in a room used for feasts (**Fig. III. 9**). Several votive finds were discovered in the second room, such as a statue of IOM Dolichenus standing on a bull, statues of vultures and bulls, small statuettes made of the god's stone and weapons³³⁵.

The cult of IOM Dolichenus was present at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa as well, where a *dolichenum* was located *intra muros*, close to the south-western corner. An inscription dating to the beginning of the 3rd century mentions several priests that have Semite names – *Abraenus*, *Gora*, *Barsemon*³³⁶. Two altars with inscriptions, three votive reliefs and one high relief with an inscription dedicated to this oriental god confirm the existence of the temple³³⁷.

³³² Sanie S., 1981, p. 193-194; Husar A., 2003, p. 125.

³³³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 194.

³³⁴ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 143, 248.

³³⁵ Gudea N., 2003, p. 226; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 69, 136-137, 252.

³³⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 64-65; Pop C., 1994, p. 70; Husar A., 2003, p. 113; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 247-248.

³³⁷ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 89; Sanie S., 1981, p. 59, 70; Husar A., 2003, p. 114.

Jupiter Hierapolitanus had a temple dedicated to him in Micia; it was discovered in 1947, 400 meters south-east from the military camp. The foundation of the construction had an approximate oval shape but no walls were revealed. The excavations unearthed several altars, fragments of statues and columns, fragments of capitals and roof tiles³³⁸.

In 1889, archaeological excavations revealed a temple of Malagbelus in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, identified as *Malagbel III*. Due to lack of plans, its location had not been settled, yet the archaeologists indicate different possibilities: north-east of the amphitheatre, close to building *Malagbel II* or north-west of the city³³⁹.

Archaeological research in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa revealed the ruins of a temple that was first considered to have been built in honour of gods of Syrian origin³⁴⁰. However, the inscription that certified the construction of the temple mentions gods only of Palmyrian origin, therefore this temple became known as the *Palmyrian temple* or as the “*Syrian*” temple³⁴¹. According to the inscription, the temple was dedicated to *diis patriis Malagbet et Bebellahamon et Benefal et Manavat* by P. Ael. Theimes; he also built a public kitchen (*culina*) next to the temple³⁴² (see *supra*). The temple is located on the Dănilăștilor Hill, west of the city, and it was discovered in 1881. The entrance of the temple was located on the eastern side; it provided access to a small narthex which preceded the *cella*. The *culina*, which was specific for oriental temples, was attached to the southern wall³⁴³ of the temple and inside it were found bones of sheep, goats, pigs and cattle which are to be correlated with the liturgical feasts that followed the sacrifice³⁴⁴ (**Fig. III. 10**). Excavations revealed that the temple was set on fire and, afterwards, had his walls destroyed on purpose³⁴⁵.

³³⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 121, 123; Sanie S., 1981, p. 96-97; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 77; Pop C., 1994, p. 71.

³³⁹ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 77.

³⁴⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 88.

³⁴¹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 202; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 84.

³⁴² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 88; Nemeti S., 2004, p. 40; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 203; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 62-63.

³⁴³ Turcan R., 1998, p. 201; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 88-89.

³⁴⁴ Sanie S., 1981, p. 203-204.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

The temple of Bêl was discovered and investigated in Porolissum. It was built at the beginning of the 3rd century over the ruins of a previous temple dedicated to Liber Pater that burnt³⁴⁶, as the inscription reveals:

*PRO SALVTE IMP(eratoris) M(arci) AVR(elii)
ANTONINI AVG(usti) PII FEL(icis) DEO
PATRIO BELO N(umerus) PAL(myrenorum) SAGIT(tariorum) TEM
PLVM VI IGNIS CONSVMP(T)VM
PECVNIA SVA RESTITUTVER(unt) DEDI
CANTE [C(aio)] I[UL(io) SEPT(imio) CASTI]NO
CO(n)S(ulari) III DACI[AR(um) M(arco)?] VLPIO VICTORE
PROC(uratore) AVG(usti) PROVI[NC(iae) POR]OL(issensis) CVRA AGEN
TE T(ito) FL(avio) SATVRN[INO (centurione) LE]G(ionis) V MAC(edo
nicae) P(iae) C(onstantis)³⁴⁷*

This inscription confirms the importance of the cult of Bêl among the members of the *numerus Palmyrenorum Sagittariorum* and the support it had from the local authorities. Another inscription, discovered in 1978, mentions a *sacerdos dei Numeri Palmyrenorum*, which means that the cult had its own priests serving a temple³⁴⁸.

The temple is located in the north sector of the city, close to the entrance gate. Excavations were made in 1939-1940, 1949 and 1958-1959 when the temples of Liber Pater and Bêl were identified. In 1977-1979 Bêl's temple was revealed and the archaeologists reached the conclusion that it had three phases of constructions³⁴⁹ (**Fig. III. 11**). In the first phase there was a rectangular construction with an east-west orientation, 10.5 x 9 meters, with an apse to the west. The walls were made of river stone and mortar in the *opus incertum* technique. A coin found within the temple dates it to the first half of the 2nd century. A new construction was erected during the second phase of construction, which used some of the previous walls, such as the vault, and its orientation was deflected by 20 degrees to the north of the previous building. The entrance was on the eastern side and the roof was supported by two rows of columns.

³⁴⁶ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 247; Gudea N., 1986, p. 102.

³⁴⁷ Cf. Gudea N., 1986, p. 102.

³⁴⁸ Gudea N., 1986, p. 103.

³⁴⁹ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 74; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 136. Gudea N., 2003, p. 217 mentions two construction phases.

The archaeological investigations showed that this construction was destroyed by fire. In the last phase, the rows of columns were replaced with 0.55 metres thick stone walls. On the northern side, the new wall was constructed next to that of the vault; these walls might have been demolished due to the narrow space between them and the exterior ones. A new chamber, a portico, was added to the south-eastern side³⁵⁰. From this portico, a paved alley led to a stone pedestal built with three steps. An altar for sacrifices was built on the pedestal. South of the altar there were two ritual pits. In the first one has a circular shape with a diameter of 5 meters and a depth of 4.15 meters in which were found pieces of pottery and many fragments of bones, probably from sacrifices and feasts; next to it was a second pit that had never been used. From the altar another path, which passed over the unused ritual pit, led to a fountain located to the south³⁵¹ (**Fig. III. 12.**).

Close to the temple, a bronze statuette depicting Harpocrates, a statuette depicting Isis, several roof tiles with the inscription *N(unerus) P(almyrenorum)* and, probably, the inscription in honour of *Dea Syria* were discovered³⁵².

2.2.2. Epigraphic evidence of edifices

The reference to a priest of Dea Syria in Porolissum suggests the existence of a temple, built in honour of this deity³⁵³. The worshipper, Aurelius Gaianus, has a Syrian name. The altar may be dating from the first decades of the 3rd century³⁵⁴.

*De(ae) Suri/ae Aur/ [Ga]ianus/ dec(urio) m(unicipii) P(orolissensis)/
sace(r)do[s]*³⁵⁵

Another cult edifice of Dea Syria could have been built in Napoca, in 214, by two brothers as a votive plaque discovered here suggests³⁵⁶ (see *supra*).

³⁵⁰ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 74-75.

³⁵¹ Gudea N., 1986, p. 105.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 2003, p. 225.

³⁵³ Gudea N., 1986, p. 106-108.

³⁵⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 248; Sanie S., 1981, p. 110; Macrea M., 2009, p. 316.

³⁵⁵ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 263.

³⁵⁶ Husar A., 2003, p. 119, Macrea M., 2009, p. 316.

A temple dedicated to Jupiter Maximus Optimus Dolichenus is supposed to have been constructed in Porolissum, which is indicated by an inscription, but its exact location has not been identified. This fact is also proven by another inscription which confirms the existence of priests of IOM Doliche in this city³⁵⁷. This seems to be the case for Drobeta as well, where three *sacerdotes* of *cohors I Sagittariorum* dedicated an altar to this god which may be related to the existence of a cult edifice³⁵⁸, as well as for Ampelum since *sacerdotes* with oriental names, Marinus, Marianus, Adde Bar Semei and Oceanus Socratis, are mentioned in inscriptions; their oriental origin is confirmed by the epithets of IOM Dolichenus, identified as *deus aeternus Commagenorum*³⁵⁹.

A marble plaque from Apulum mentions the reconstruction of a temple dedicated to IOM Dolichenus by Aelius Valentinus, soldier and priest of the oriental god, in the middle of the 3rd century. The location of the temple was not identified³⁶⁰.

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(axiom) DOLICHE/ NO PRO SALVTE/
IMPERATOR(is)/ AEL(ius) VALENTINVS VET(eranus)/ SACERDOS/
TEMPL(um) IMPEDIO SVO/ RESTITUIT*³⁶¹

Another inscription from this city mentions another priest, Flavius Barhadadi who dedicated an altar to *Jupiter Dolichenus* and *Dea Suria Magna Caelestis*³⁶². The presence of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus at Apulum is also confirmed by the existence of a community of merchants of oriental origin; two *Syri negotiatores*, Aurelius Alexander and Aurelius Flavus, appear in a dedication in honour of Jupiter Dolichenus³⁶³.

The existence of a temple dedicated to Aeternus in Apulum is supported by a piece of epigraphic evidence. According to an inscription, Ulpus Proculus, *speculator*

³⁵⁷ Gudea N., 1986, p. 108; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 136; Gudea N., 2003, p. 226; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 201.

³⁵⁸ Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 142; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 201.

³⁵⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 188; Sanie S., 1981, p. 47. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 154 stated that Ampelum was a possible location for a possible cult edifice.

³⁶⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 42; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 136.

³⁶¹ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 255; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 175.

³⁶² Sanie S., 1981, p. 43; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 136; Husar A., 2003, p. 113; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 201.

³⁶³ Tudor D., 1961, p. 148; *Ibid.*, 1968a, p. 159; Sanie S., 1981, p. 42; Petolescu C., 2000, p. 233.

of *Legio XIII Geminae*, rebuilt the fountain of Aeternus at the command of Apollo which was probably located close to the temple of the Syrian god³⁶⁴.

*EX IVSSV DEI/ APOLLINIS FON/ TEM AETERNI VLP(ius)/
PROCVLINVS/ SPECULATOR LEG(ionis) XIII G(eminae)
GORDIA/NAE A SOLO RESRI/TVIT*³⁶⁵

Another inscription mentions the rebuilding of a *tabularium* which was dedicated to *IOM Aeternus* by a centurion of *Legio XIII Geminae*³⁶⁶. Both the fountain and the *tabularium* could belong to a temple dedicated to Aeternus³⁶⁷. Moreover, five columns of different sizes with inscriptions, in which Aeternus is mentioned, were discovered at Partoş and they belonged to the temple of the god. The thinner columns were used to support a portico, while the other ones were used at the entrance to the *cella*³⁶⁸. Based on the analysis of the construction materials for the columns, the beginnings of the temple can be dated to the second half of the 2nd century; the temple was restored during the first half of the following century, along with the fountain and the *tabularium*³⁶⁹.

An inscription discovered at Potaissa, in 1774, in the foundation of a temple, mentions the completion of the works at the temple dedicated to Deus Azizus in the middle of the 3rd century³⁷⁰.

*DEO AZIZO BONO P[UERO CONSERVA]/ TORI PRO SALVTE
D(ominorum)/ [N(os/ trorum) VALERIANI ET GAL]/ LIENI
AVG(ustorum) ET VALERIAN[I NOBILIS/ S(imi) CAESARIS]/ ET
CORNELIAE SALONINA[E AUGUSTAE ET]/ :EG(ionis) V/ MAC. III
PIAE FID[ELIS...]/ DONATVS PEAEF. LEG. EIVSDE[M...]/
TEMPLUM/ INCE(p)TVM PERFECIT V[...]*³⁷¹

³⁶⁴ Sanie S., 1981, p. 146; Zugravu N., 2004-2005, p. 14; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 118.

³⁶⁵ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 270; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 174.

³⁶⁶ Sanie S., 1981, p. 145; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 132.

³⁶⁷ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 132.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132-133.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³⁷⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 119; Turcan R., 1998, p. 212; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 134; Macrea M., 2007, p. 318; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 202; Ştefănescu-Oniţiu A., 2009, p. 143.

³⁷¹ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 266; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 174; Ştefănescu-Oniţiu A., 2009, p. 230.

In the 3rd century, the cult of Deus Azizus seems to have become official; therefore the intervention of the legion in order to complete the construction of the temple could have been an obligation towards the ruling family³⁷².

Inscriptions point to the existence of cult edifices of Sol Invictus in Roman Dacia, one in Apulum and the other one in Micia. In Apulum was discovered an inscription in the ruins of a temple in the 18th century which recorded the reconstruction of an *aedes* dedicated to Sol Invictus by C. Caerellius Sabinus, *legatus* of *legio XIII Geminae*³⁷³.

*SOLI INVICTO/ AEDEM RESTITUIT/ C(aius) CAERELLIUS/
SABINUS/ LEG(atus) AUG(usti)/ LEG(ionis) XIII GEM(inae)*³⁷⁴

A *libertus*, P. Aelius Euphorus, built a temple of *Deus Invictus* in Micia, probably at the end of the 3rd century. The altar with the inscription of Euphorus was discovered in Șoimușul Mureșan in 1966, but it came from Micia. The exact location of the temple can not be determined; however, taking into consideration the fact that the temples dedicated to oriental deities were usually grouped together, there is a possibility that the temple of Sol Invictus was located southwest of the military camp, near the temple of Jupiter Hierapolitanus³⁷⁵.

*DEO/ INVICTO/ [P(ublius)] AEL(ius) EVPHO/ RVS PRO/ SALVTE
SVA ET SVORUM/ TEMPLUM A SOLO/ FECIT*³⁷⁶

2.2.3. Possible locations of religious edifices

Jupiter Dolichenus may have been dedicated a temple in Samum, where a slab with inscription was discovered. The slab could have been placed above the entrance of the cult edifice and the inscription could have mentioned its construction in the 3rd

³⁷² Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 134-135; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 90.

³⁷³ Sanie S., 1981, p. 132, 133; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 139.

³⁷⁴ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 267; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 177; Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 206.

³⁷⁵ Sanie S., 1981, p. 130, 133; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 139; Nemeti S., 2004, p. 42; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 111.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 269; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 177.

century³⁷⁷. The popularity of the Syrian god in Samum is confirmed by the discovery of three other inscriptions dedicated to him by soldiers³⁷⁸.

The cult of the Palmyrian god Iarhibol is present in Apulum, fact which is supported by two inscriptions made by priests of this deity³⁷⁹. The first inscription was made by Aelius Nisa in the first half of the 2nd century. The second inscription dates from the 3rd century and was made by Aurelius Bassionus, *decurio coloniae Aequenses* and *sacerdos numinum*. The names of the priests point to an oriental origin³⁸⁰. The temple can not be located due to the lack of information concerning the place of discovery of these inscriptions³⁸¹.

Two other temples dedicated to Malagbêl are supposed to be located in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. An inscription dedicated to this deity was discovered close to the temple conventionally named EM 18, which led to the assumption that in this area was located a temple dedicated to Malagbelus, conventionally named *Malagbel I*. A votive altar dedicated to Malagbel was discovered east of the temple of *Dis Pater* and *Proserpina*, therefore the edifice close to it was assigned to this deity and named *Malagbel II*. Due to the fact that its foundation was destroyed, no plan of the cult edifice can be made³⁸².

³⁷⁷ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 154.

³⁷⁸ Sanie S., 1981, p. 50-51.

³⁷⁹ Sanie S., 1981, p. 194; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 153; Bărbulesu M., 2009, p. 129.

³⁸⁰ Sanie S., 1981, p. 194; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 153.

³⁸¹ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 153.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

3. Annexe III.

Fig. III. 1. Monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena cf. Popescu M., Planche XXVII.

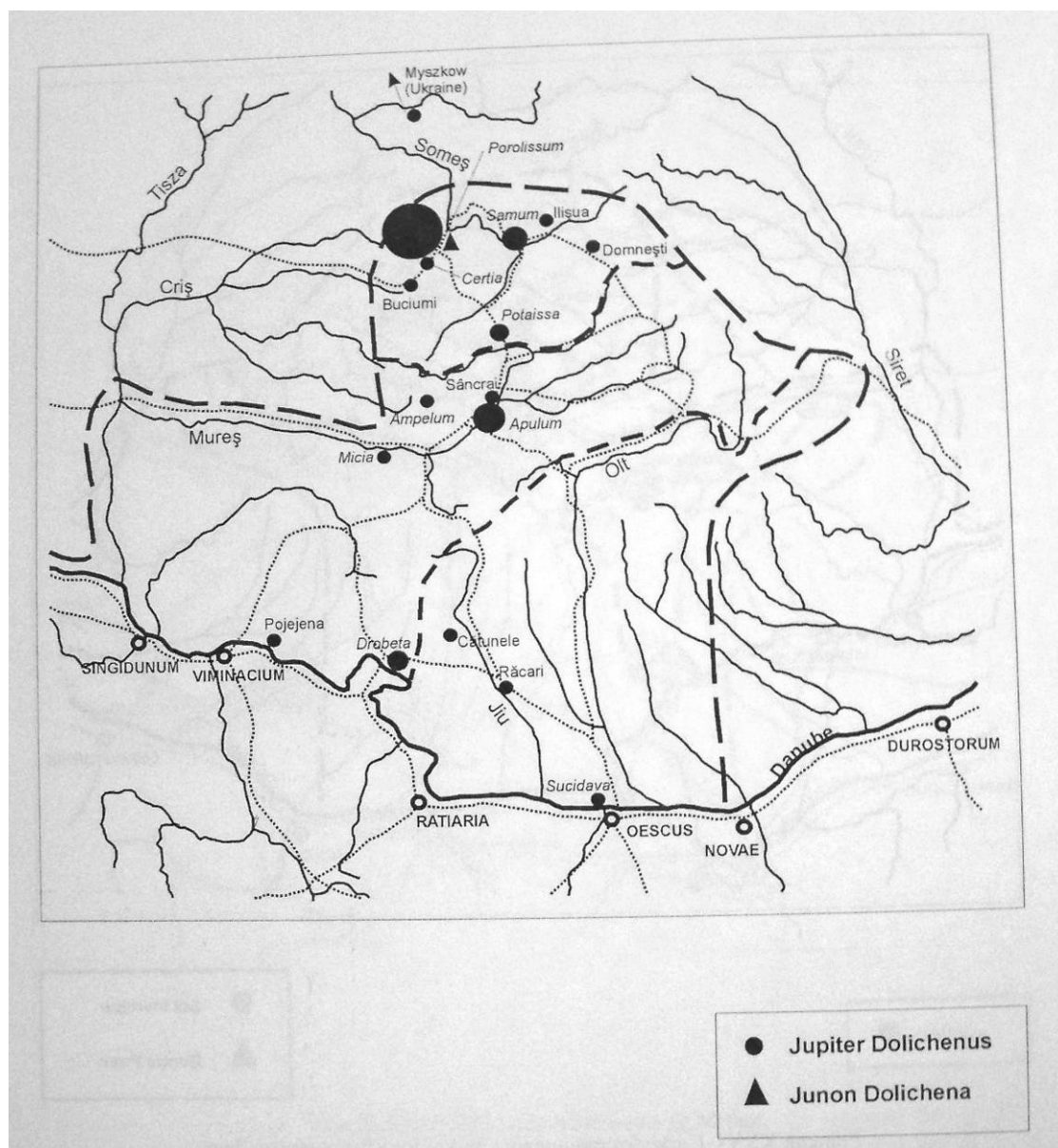


Fig. III. 3. Artistic representation of Jupiter Dolichenus from Amărăștii de Sus cf. Sanie S., 1981, Planșa V. 5.



Fig. III. 4. Bronze statuettes from Desa and Ilișua cf. Sanie S., 1981, Planșa V. 2, V. 3.



Desa



Ilișua

Fig. III. 5. Jupiter Dolichenus from Porolissum cf. Alföldy-Găzdac Á., 2003, p. 157, Pl. 6.

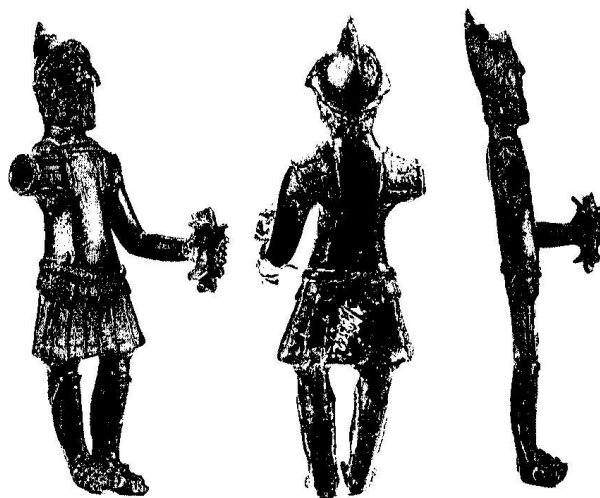


Fig. III. 6. Votive monuments with inscriptions dedicated to Azizos cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 122.

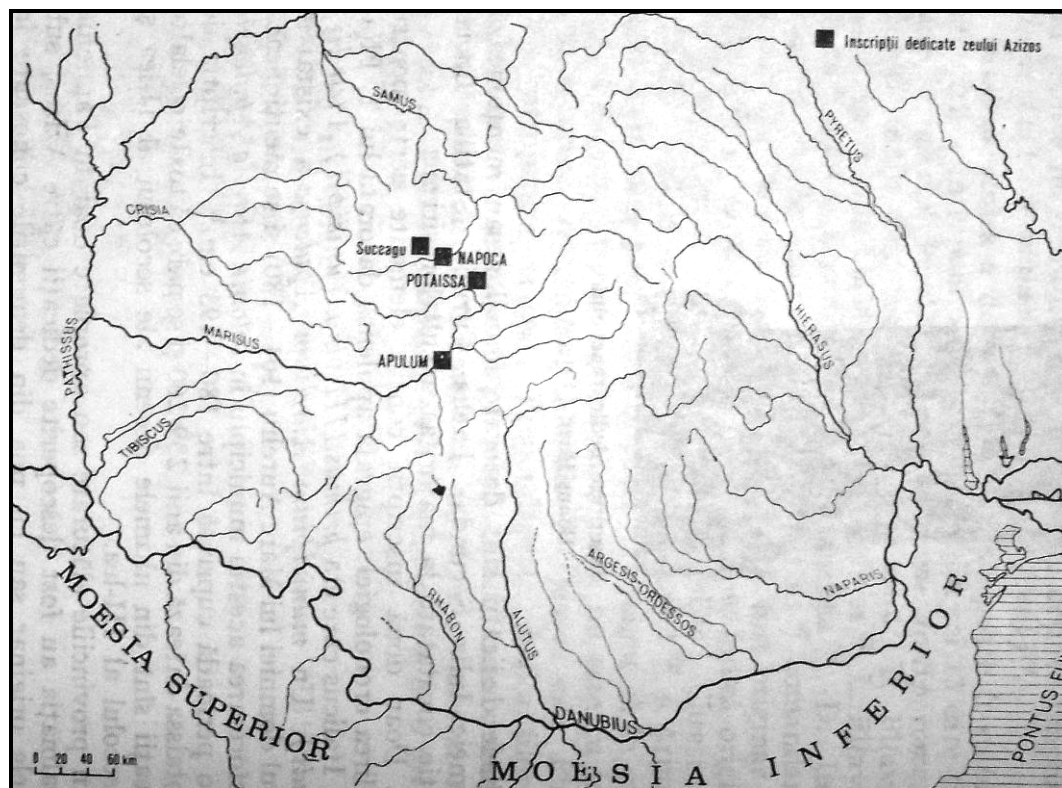


Fig. III. 7. Inscriptions and artistic representations of Sol Invictus cf. Sanie S., 1981, p. 139.

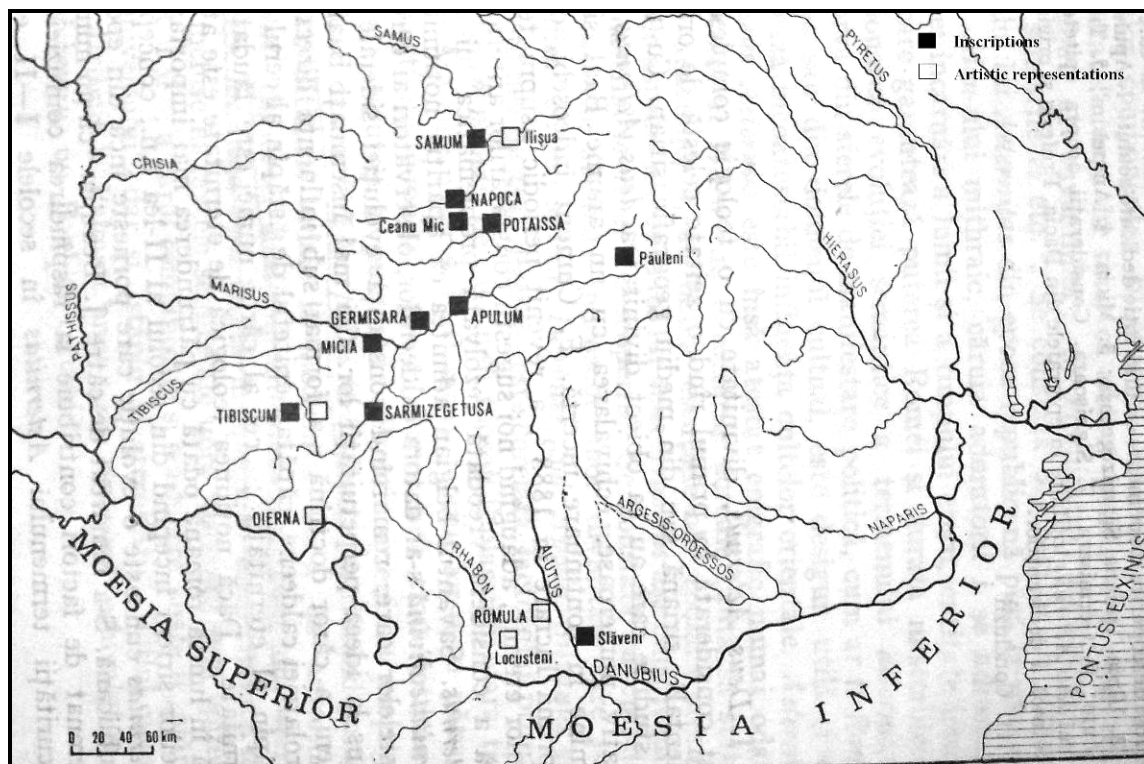


Fig. III. 8. Porolissum - Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus cf. Gudea N., 2003, p. 228, Fig. 10.

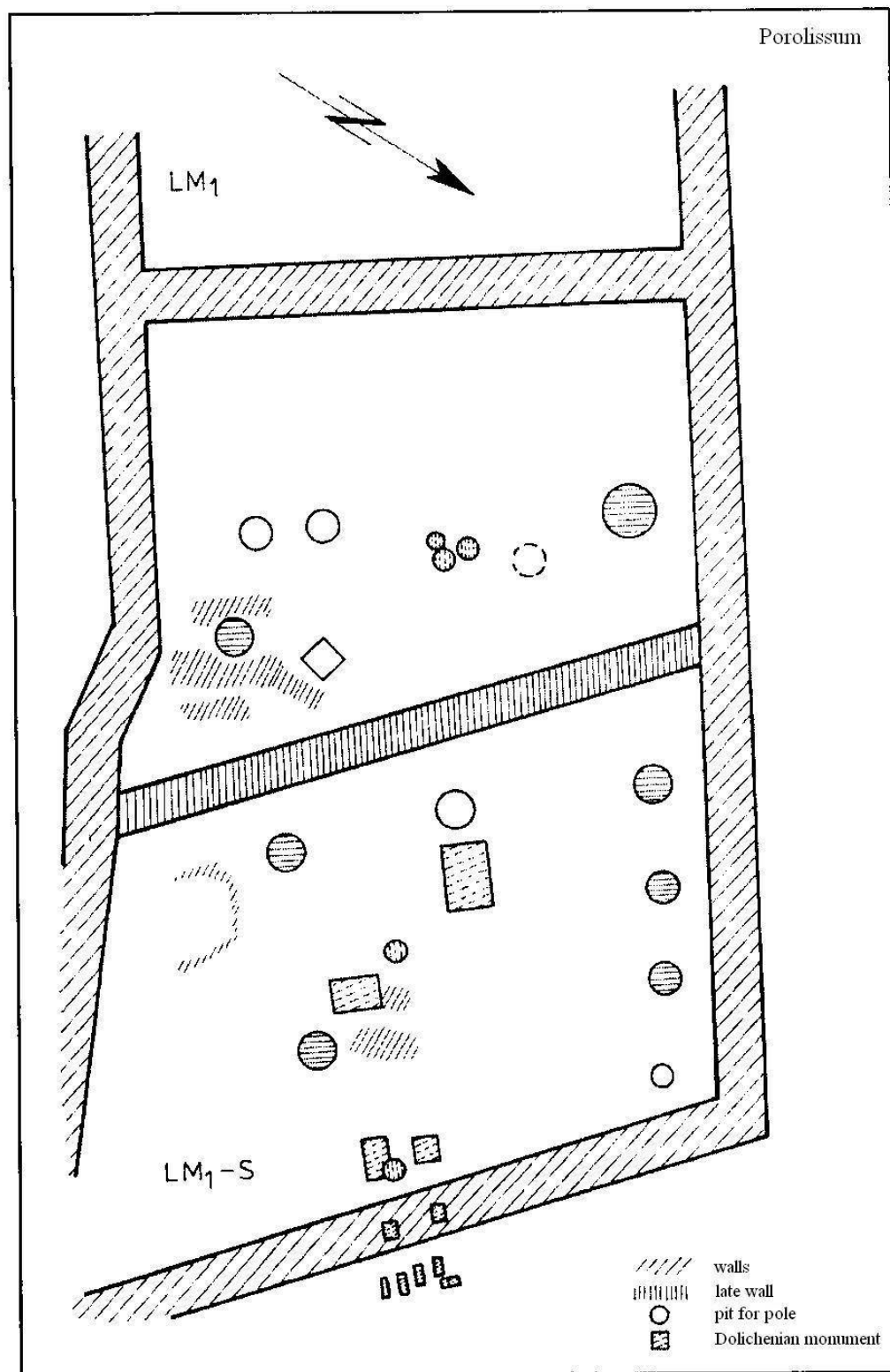


Fig. III. 9. Porolissum – Inscription from the temple of IOM Dolichenus cf. Gudea N., 2003, p. 229, Fig. 11.

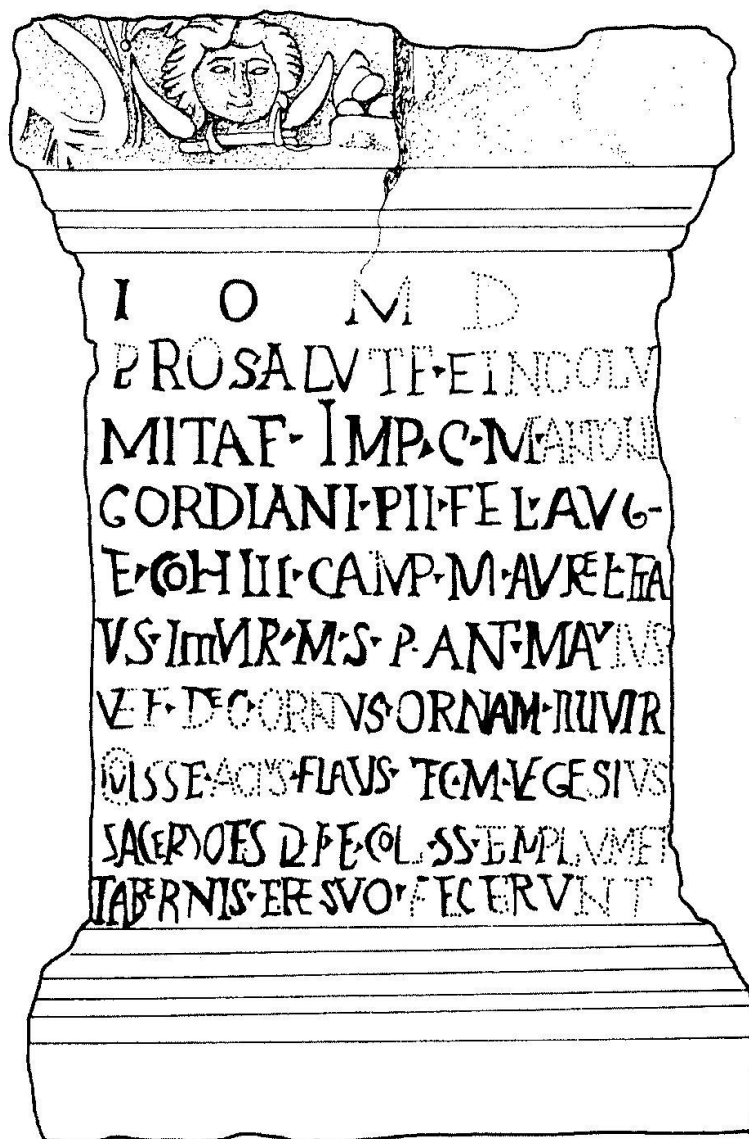


Fig. III. 10. Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa – Plan and reconstitution of the temple of Palmyrian gods cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 87, Planşa XXVII.

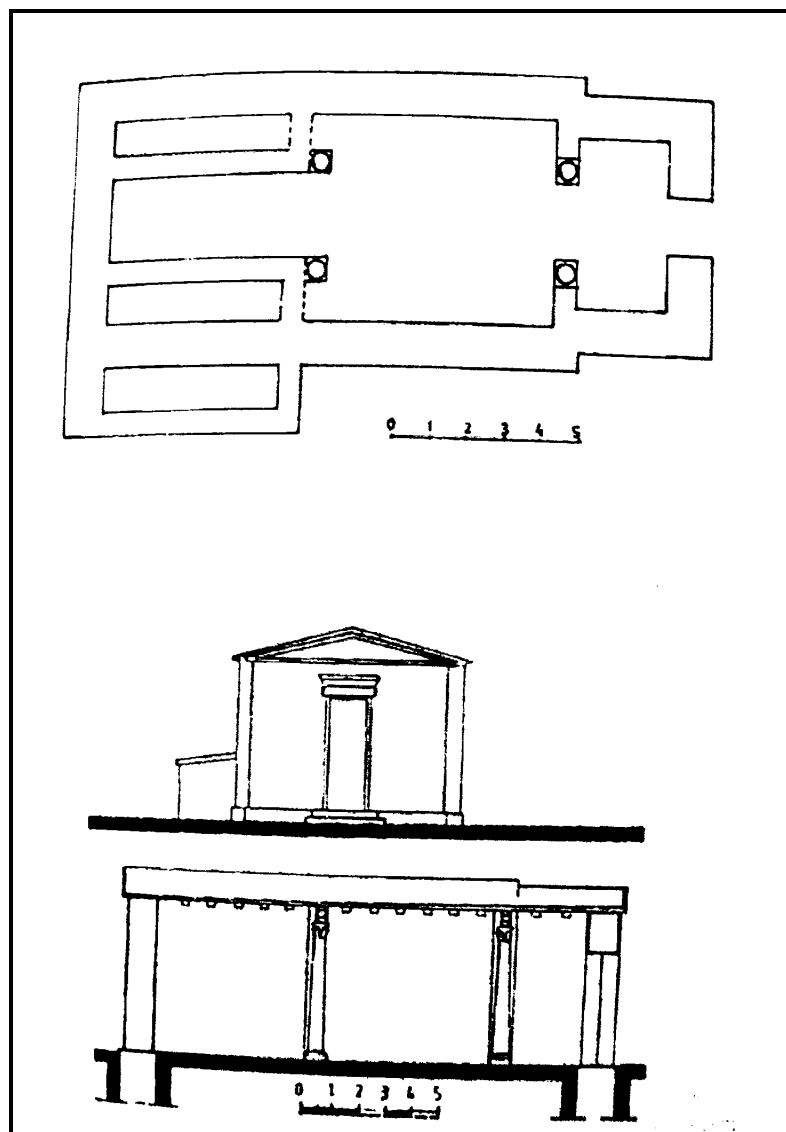


Fig. III. 11. Temple of Bel from Porolissum: general plan and constructions phases cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 76, PLANȘA XXII.

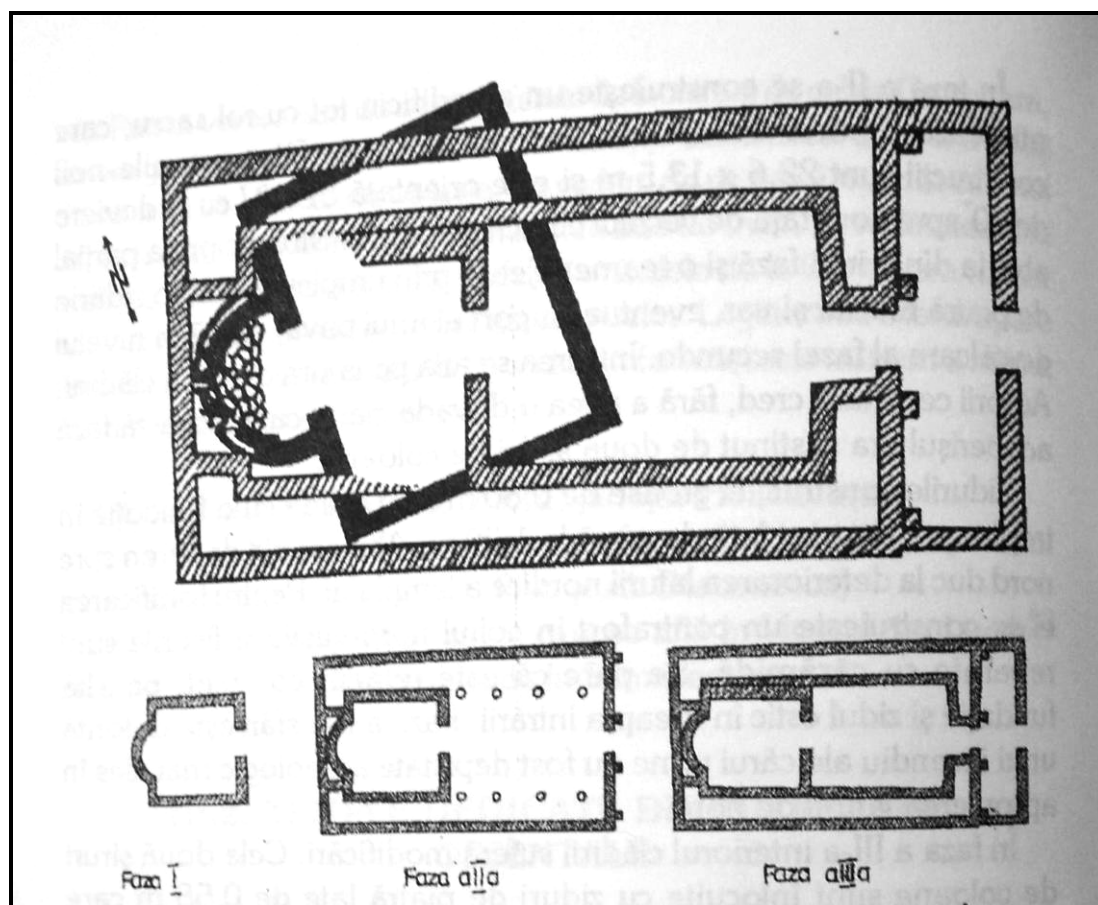
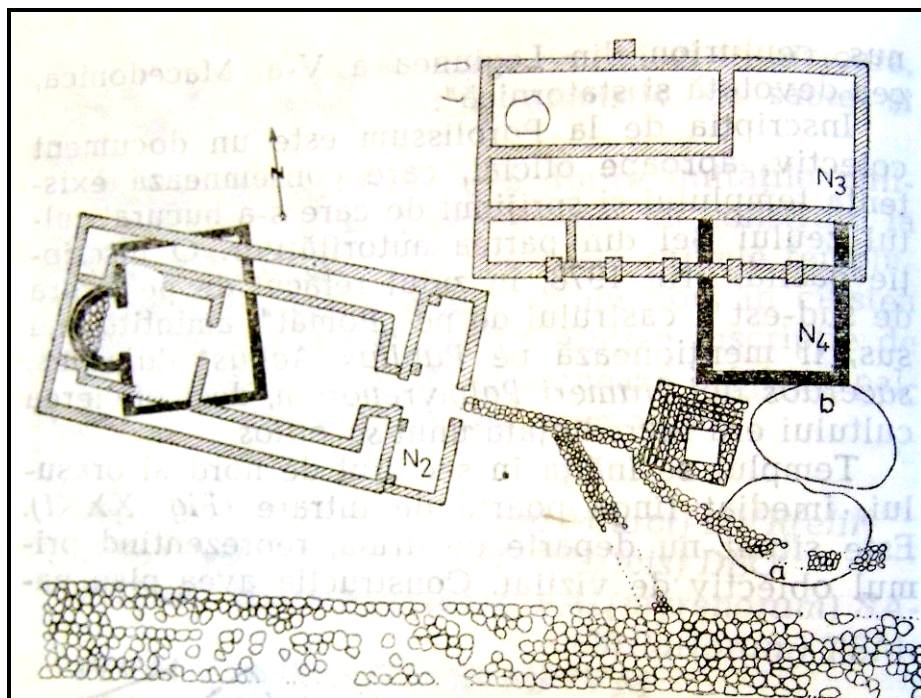


Fig. III. 12. Temple of Bel from Porolissum with the alleys, altar and ritual pits cf. Gudea N., 1986, p. 104, Fig. XXXII.



IV. MITHRAS' CULT

Mithras cult was one of the most popular of the Oriental cults in the Roman Empire and its territories contemporary with early Christianity. The origins and the evolution of his cult and its features have been analyzed by numerous scholars and researchers. A great number of studies were dedicated to Mithras votive monuments and cult edifices. All these point to the popularity of the cult not only in the ancient world, but also in the modern one.

1. Characteristics and dissemination of Mithras' cult in the Roman Empire

Mithras' cult had a composite character since it combined different systems of beliefs and the path of its evolution had started with the beliefs of ancient Iran. The Semite doctrine put its landmark on the cult, to which elements of the local cults of Asia Minor were added. The cult of Mithras borrowed some forms from the Greek world; under this influence, the iconography of Mithras acquired new forms of expression since the artistic representations depicted the god in an idealized manner, like the one used to depict their own gods. The Greeks tried to identify from Mithraism their own ideas. However, the character of Mithras' cult has always been an exotic one; despite the influences mentioned, his cult maintained its original characteristics³⁸³.

Consequently, Mithras was the light of the sun that brought life and prosperity on earth, the ruler of wasters, the provider of material and spiritual blessings and the one that fought against the evil gods. He assured the victory of the army and, therefore, he became its the protector. Under the influence of the Zoroastrian system, the ceremonies of his cult became more rigorous; purifications preceded the ritual, during which offerings and sacrifices were performed. The Chaldean theology introduced the veneration of the stars in Mithras' cult; the gods of the two cults were identified and

³⁸³ Turcan R., 1998, 227-232; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 25; Cumont F., 2008, p. 147-148; Trofin L., 2009, p. 115.

Mithras became the Sun, known as Şamaş, god of justice, protector of the army and of the kings. Under the Greek influence, Mithras-Şamaş was identified with Helios and the iconography of the former was modified to suit the tastes of the Greeks; moreover, stoicism tried to conciliate the two doctrines and provided rational explications to mithraic customs, which seemed absurd at that time. The Greek language replaced the Persian one used during rituals but the liturgy remained unchanged. After receiving these influences, Mithras' cult arrived to Rome fully developed³⁸⁴.

The annexation or conquest of several oriental provinces into the Roman world established political and commercial relations between these two worlds and their contacts assured the dissemination of Mithras' cult in the Roman territories starting with the 1st century AD³⁸⁵.

The main vehicle of the dissemination of the cult was the army. Mithras was a warrior-god and therefore the protector of the soldiers. The oriental troops were sent to the borders of the Empire and there the native cult of Mithras was kept, while the cult itself gathered more followers³⁸⁶. From there, the cult was spread to all the corners of the Empire, such as Moesia, Dacia, Pannonia, Germany, Gallia, Algeria and Spain³⁸⁷. After ending their military service, the veterans settled in the territories close to their former camps, where they continued to worship Mithras; in this environment, they attracted new followers as well. Furthermore, the merchants were also an important factor of dissemination of the cult. The commercial relations between the Orient and the Roman world encouraged the merchants to move from their native lands into the Roman territories³⁸⁸.

The military campaigns and the commercial relations with the Orient provided numerous oriental slaves; they contributed to the spread of Mithras' cult as well³⁸⁹. The employees of the administrative system were also faithful worshipers of Mithras³⁹⁰. The imperial favour enhanced furthermore the dissemination of the cult within the Roman

³⁸⁴ For more information concerning the influences of other cults and systems of belief received by Mithras cults, see Cumont F., 2007, p. 15-45.

³⁸⁵ Turcan R., 1998, p. 235-236; Cumont F., 49-51.

³⁸⁶ Cumont F., 2007, p. 52-55; *Ibid.*, 2008, p. 148-149.

³⁸⁷ For more details concerning the dissemination of Mithras cult in the Roman Empire, see Turcan R., 1998, p. 237-245 and Cumont F., 2007, p. 56-70.

³⁸⁸ Cumont F., 2007, p. 71-72.

³⁸⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 74-85 for their influence on the dissemination of the cult.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85-86.

world. Nero (54-68) was fascinated by the oriental cults, but the first emperor to be officially converted to Mithraism was Commodus (180-192) and since then the emperors found in Mithraism the support of their personal policy and a reason to justify their despotism³⁹¹.

Several aspects assured the cult's popularity in the Roman Empire, such as the mysterious rituals and the secret ceremonies, the initiation process, the hierarchy of the worshipers and its doctrine³⁹². There are no ancient written accounts of Mithras myth, but some episodes of his sacred story can be extracted from the scenes depicted on various artistic representations. The iconic scenes of Mithras depict him being born from a rock, sacrificing a bull in a cave, releasing waters from rock and sharing a banquet with the Sun-god. The most popular narrative sequence of the myth was the tauroctony, or the sacrifice of the bull: Mithras caught the bull in the cave; he held the nose of the bull with one hand and with the other stabbed the animal. Plants and herbs started to appear from the bull's wound, wheat from its spine and wine from his blood. The demons tried to corrupt this source of life and sent the scorpion, the ant and the snake to take the genital organs of the bull and to drink its blood, but they failed. Through sacrifice, Mithras became the creator of life and its protector³⁹³. Two characters are depicted on artistic representations of the myth: two young men, each carrying a torch (*dadophori*), one lifting it and the other holding it down. They were known as *Cauti* (*Cautes*) and *Cautopati* (*Cautopates*) and they were the incarnation of Mithras, two antagonistic reflections of the god. From a symbolist point of view, they were seen as personifications of the sunrise and of the sunset and their attributes were the heat and the cold since they usually appear under the bust of the Sun and under that of the Moon. Mithras could have been the symbol of the Sun at noon, therefore the three characters formed a triad of the Sun and they represented the daily solar cycle³⁹⁴.

Mithraism had no public ceremonies, since they were performed in an isolated space and only the initiated ones were allowed to participate. The cult edifices dedicated

³⁹¹ Cumont F., 2007, p. 95-99; Moga I., 2007, p. 258-259, 261.

³⁹² Turcan R., 1998, p. 271; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 25; Popescu M., 2004, p. 126-127; Cumont F., 2008, p. 150.

³⁹³ For the narration of the myth see Cumont F., 2007, p. 138-145. For interpretations of the sacrificial scene on artistic representations, see Beck R., 2006, p. 190-239.

³⁹⁴ Turcan R., 1998, p. 255-256; Beck R., 2006, p. 107; Cumont F., 2007, p. 136-138.

to Mithra, the so called *mithraea*, were located outside the settlements, in natural caves, or in underground temples with an arched roof which were built to imitate the cave; they were constructed on the banks of rivers or close to a spring. The mithraeum could have been built close to the city wall or chapels were located within the city, in private houses, especially in their underground chambers³⁹⁵.

The cave or its imitation (*spelaeum* or *mithraeum*) had the purpose to evoke the episode of the sacrifice of the bull and the divine feast. The community of worshippers was re-enacting the archetypal feast; consequently, the sanctuary was decorated to serve as an ancient dinner hall, with two benches (*podia*) which were parallel with the walls and placed on each side of a central corridor paved with a mosaic. The artistic representation of the tauroctony was placed in the centre of the crypt. Altars were also placed in the mithraeum, along with the sculptural depictions of Cautes and Cautopates. According to the social status of the worshippers, the mithraeum was decorated with other cult representations and with different architectural annexes. The dimensions of the underground edifices varied; it had a south-north orientation, with the entrance on the southern side³⁹⁶.

The initiation ritual performed in the mithraeum introduced the worshipper in a religious society in which a hierarchy with several grades functioned. The grades were the Raven, the Hidden, the Soldier, the Lion, the Persian, the Heliodromus or the Sun-runner and the Father. Each of the grades had their own attributes and clothing and a particular role within the mithraeum and its rituals³⁹⁷.

Only men were allowed to be initiated in the cult of Mithras which cherished especially the virtues of soldiers. Mithras assured the victory of armies and the victory against the evil gods, he was the defender of truth and justice. According to these characteristics, Mithras was worshipped with the epithets *Nabarze*, *Invictus*, *insuperabilis* or *ανίκητος* which all mean the undefeated or the unconquered³⁹⁸.

³⁹⁵ Turcan R., 1998, p. 246-248, Beck R., 2006, p. 105-112.

³⁹⁶ Turcan R., 1998, p. 249-251; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 239; Moga I., 2007, p. 262-263.

³⁹⁷ Cumont F., 2007, p. 159-161; Trofin L., 2009, p. 117-118.

³⁹⁸ Cumont F., 2007, p. 148-149.

2. Mithras' cult in Roman Dacia

2.1. Artistic representations and epigraphic monuments

Mithras' cult was brought to Dacia by the military units sent there after the transformation of its territory into a Roman province. The main factor of dissemination of the cult was the army, since Mithraism was worshipped especially by the military units, but also by the colonists brought from the Oriental provinces of the Roman world. The main social categories included citizens working in the administration of the settlements, slaves and freedmen. They dedicated numerous artistic monuments to Mithras, the most popular scene being the tauroctony³⁹⁹.

The number of artistic representations and epigraphic monuments dedicated to Mithras represent approximately 10% of the total votive monuments dedicated to the oriental cults⁴⁰⁰, since approximately 280 such monuments were discovered in Dacia which means that Mithras' cult was the most popular cult in Dacia⁴⁰¹. His cult was present in urban areas such as Apulum, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Porolissum, Potaissa, Romula and Drobeta, as well as in their territories (**Fig. IV. 1**).

The most numerous artistic representations of Mithra are the bas-reliefs. They are divided into three categories: reliefs with one scene (the sacrifice), reliefs with two scenes (the central scene of the tauroctony, final scenes of the myth are depicted in the inferior part of the votive monument) and reliefs with three scenes (the main scene of the sacrifice and two scenes depicting other episodes of the myth)⁴⁰² (**Fig. IV. 2**).

The archaeological excavations of the mithraeum in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa revealed an important number of votive monuments, of which most of them are reliefs depicting the tauroctony and different episodes from Mithras' cult, as well as votive plaques depicting Mithras and Cautopates⁴⁰³. Several votive monuments were revealed

³⁹⁹ Cumont F., 2007, p. 57-58.

⁴⁰⁰ *Istoria Românilor*, 2001, II, p. 246.

⁴⁰¹ Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 134; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 31; Husar A., 2003, p. 101; Macrea M., 2007, p. 317.

⁴⁰² Petolescu C., 2007, p. 206. Cumont F., 2007, p. 58 mentions a number of 50 votive monuments discovered in the mithraeum.

⁴⁰³ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 235; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 208-209

in the settlements of the territory of the Dacian capital as well, such as Aquae, Germisara, Oarda de Sus and Micia⁴⁰⁴.

According to the number of votive monuments, Apulum was the second centre of Mithraism, after Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. A number of 20 fragmented rectangular reliefs depicting the central scene of the tauroctony. A fragmented statuary group was discovered in this city, as well as three statues of *Mithras petrogenitus*, two heads of Mithras wearing the Phrygian cap, two statues of the Cautes or Cautopates wearing oriental clothing and holding a bull's head in their hands⁴⁰⁵.

Another important city where Mithraism developed was Potaissa where 10 monuments were dedicated to Mithras, including a colossal statue from which only the head survived⁴⁰⁶. Nine reliefs were revealed in Pojejena⁴⁰⁷, five were discovered in the mithraeum located in Slăveni, on the banks of Olt River⁴⁰⁸, three in Sucidava⁴⁰⁹, two Dierna⁴¹⁰, one fragmented in Drobeta⁴¹¹. Several fragmented votive monuments were also discovered in Doștat⁴¹², Cincșor⁴¹³ and Bumbestii⁴¹⁴.

A bronze statue from Drobeta depicts the scene of the tauroctony: Mithras holds his leg on the head of the bull, he wears the Phrygian cap, a tunic with a belt and he holds a knife in his right hand, ready to strike. The statue is nowadays lost⁴¹⁵.

The votive monuments dedicated to Mithras include several fragmented statues as well, mostly fragmented, such as the head of the god, the *Mithra petrogenitus* statue and statues depicting Cautes and Cautopates⁴¹⁶. Such representations of Mithra

⁴⁰⁴ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 117, 317, 319 (for Aquae), p. 136-137 (Germisara), p. 125 (Micia); Petolescu C., 2007, p. 210.

⁴⁰⁵ Băluță, C.L., 1974, p. 130-132; Bărbulescu M., 1984, p. 162-163; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 31-33; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 213.

⁴⁰⁶ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 156; Macrea M., 2007, p. 214; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 209.

⁴⁰⁷ D. Tudor, 1968a, p. 65 mentions only 2 reliefs; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 208. For a detailed description of nine of the votive monuments discovered in Pojejena, see Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 251-252.

⁴⁰⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 358; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 207. For a description of the votive monuments, see Petolescu C., 2007, p. 220-221.

⁴⁰⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 331; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 654; *Ibid.*, 2007, p. 207.

⁴¹⁰ Petolescu C., 2007, p. 208.

⁴¹¹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 302; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 654; *Ibid.*, 2007, p. 207.

⁴¹² D. Tudor, 1968a, p. 140-141; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 210.

⁴¹³ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 281; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 239; Popescu M., 2004, p. 243; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 210.

⁴¹⁴ Petolescu C., 1971, p. 654; Tudor D., 1978, p. 384; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 207.

⁴¹⁵ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 302; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 654. Ștefănescu-Onițiu A., 2009, p. 66, 259.

⁴¹⁶ Petolescu C., 2007, p. 206.

petrogenitus were revealed in Decea Mureşului⁴¹⁷, Romula⁴¹⁸ and Potaissa⁴¹⁹ (Fig. IV.7).

Concerning the epigraphic monuments made in honour of Mithras, most of the dedications are made to *Mithras Invictus*, since this was the most popular epithet in the Roman world. The phrases used are *Deus Invicto*, *numini invicto*, or simply *Invicto*⁴²⁰. The Iranian correspondent of this epithet is also used in Dacia where he appears as *Nabarze deo* (Ulpia Traiana) and *Soli Invicto Nabarze Mithrae*⁴²¹ (Fig. IV. 3).

The main social class that dedicated altars with inscriptions to Mithras are the members of military units. The soldiers were members of different units, such as of *legio XIII Geminae* (*Sol Invictus Mithras*, *Invictus Mithras*, *Deus Invictus Mithras*), present in Apulum⁴²², *legio V Macedonica* – Potaissa (*Invictus*, *Deus Invicto*)⁴²³ and *legio XXII Primigenia* – Dierna, *Numerus Surorum* - Romula⁴²⁴ and others⁴²⁵. In addition to this social class, the civilian one can also be added, which included citizens working in the administration of the settlements, slaves and freedmen⁴²⁶.

2.2. Cult edifices

2.2.1. Archaeologically investigated

During the first half of the 19th century, the first mithraea have been identified on the territory of ancient Roman Dacia, one in Slăveni and one in Romula. Since then, several other cult edifices have been archaeologically investigated in several Roman settlements, such as Apulum, Decea and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa⁴²⁷.

⁴¹⁷ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 232-233; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 213.

⁴¹⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 345; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 651; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 207.

⁴¹⁹ Jude, M., Pop, C., 1972, p. 20.

⁴²⁰ Macrea M., 2007, p. 317-318.

⁴²¹ Husar A., 2003, p. 102-103; Cumont F., 2007, p. 149.

⁴²² Ştefănescu-Oniţiu A., 2009, p. 82.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54, 73.

⁴²⁵ For more information concerning this issue, see Jitărel A., 2004-2005, p. 202-208, Popescu M., 2004, p. 126-128.

⁴²⁶ See Jitărel A., 2004-2005, p. 208-213 for more information.

⁴²⁷ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 231; Husar A., 2003, p. 103-104.

In 1921, a mithraeum was identified in Apulum during the construction of the foundation of the nowadays orthodox cathedral⁴²⁸. Several years later, in 1930, another mithraeum was discovered in the same Roman city, located close to the “Horea, Cloșca și Crișan” High school⁴²⁹. The discovery of numerous votive monuments in Apulum supports the existence of mithraea dedicated to Mithras⁴³⁰. Due to the lack of plans and information, no details concerning these cult edifices can be provided.

The mithraeum in Decea, Alba County, was discovered in 1888, according to a manuscript found in the archives of the History Museum of Aiud⁴³¹. In the document it is mentioned the fact that the cult monument was dug 7-8 metres above the Valley of Mureș River; the foundation of the sanctuary was made of dacite tuff and black clay and the temple probably had a simple plan⁴³² (**Fig. IV. 4**).

The edifice was located close to the civilian settlement and the Roman road linking Potaissa and Apulum. It had a south-north orientation, with the entrance on the southern side. The water supply of the temple was provided by the spring located close to the foundation wall. The manuscript mentions two rooms: the first one, the narthex, was partly destroyed and was bigger than the second one. The rooms were separated by a wall with a door in the middle. If the information and the plan provided by the manuscript are accurate, then this mithraeum is atypical, since there are no similar cult edifices with a wider narthex than the rest of the construction discovered in the Roman territories. Several monuments were discovered in the second room, which gathered now in the History Museum of Aiud. A small pedestal, supporting the representation of *Mithras petrogenitus*, was revealed in the middle of the northern wall. Another altar was located on the same wall and two more on the eastern wall. An altar for sacrifices was discovered to the right side of the entrance. The roof of the sanctuary was made of tiles. Ceramic fragments were also discovered in the nave⁴³³.

⁴²⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 147; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 33.

⁴²⁹ Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 33.

⁴³⁰ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 237.

⁴³¹ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 232; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 78; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 33.

⁴³² Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 232; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 78.

⁴³³ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 232-233.

An underground temple dedicated to Mithras has been partially identified in Porolissum⁴³⁴. It was located in the *latus sinistrum* of the Pomet Hill fort; it was named building C3. It was located between building C4, to the west, and the headquarters, to the east (**Fig. IV. 5** and **Fig IV. 6**). The floor level of the edifice was 4 metres below the paved square. The walls were preserved to a height of approximately 1.5 metres and show traces of paint⁴³⁵. The edifice had an arched roof which was 3 metres high at its highest peak; inscriptions were put on each side of the central axis⁴³⁶. The central corridor was paved with a mosaic⁴³⁷. Several votive monuments were discovered in the room with the mosaics, along with fragmentary plaques depicting the Danubian riders and a statue of Venus and Cupid⁴³⁸.

Dumitru Tudor affirms that several cult edifices dedicated to Mithras existed in Romula. One such edifice was discovered in the beginning of the 19th century. The author provides several details which were taken from a note concerning the edifice made by the engineer Alexander Popovici who visited the Roman settlement in the first half of the 19th century⁴³⁹. The information provided by the note was used by other scholars as well; it mentions the round shape of the edifice, the altar located in the centre of the room and two cult objects, a vessel made of glass and a wooden box with golden handles. The mithraeum was located in a slope of Teslui River⁴⁴⁰. The circular or semicircular room was actually the apse of the temple, located underground, fact which is confirmed by the central position of the altar for sacrifices, a common feature of the mithraea. The rest of the temple was destroyed at the date of the observation⁴⁴¹. Next to the temple there was a fountain which was necessary for rituals, another feature of the cult edifices built in the honour of Mithras⁴⁴².

⁴³⁴ Gudea N., 1986, p. 48, 108; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238; Gudea N., 2003, p. 234; Husar A., 2003, p. 104.

⁴³⁵ Gudea N., 1986, p. 48, 108; *Ibid.*, 2003, p. 234-235; Popescu M., 2004, p. 232.

⁴³⁶ Gudea N., 1986, p. 48. The same author, Gudea N., 1986, p. 108, gives another dimension of the arched roof, that of 2.5 metres.

⁴³⁷ Gudea N., 1986, p. 108; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238.

⁴³⁸ Gudea N., 1986, p. 48, 109; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238; Popescu M., 2004, p. 232.

⁴³⁹ Tudor D., 1968b, p. 30.

⁴⁴⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 354; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 237.

⁴⁴¹ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 237.

⁴⁴² Tudor D., 1878, p. 388.

The existence of a mithraeum in Romula is also supported by numerous votive monuments, such as altars with inscriptions and artistic representations that were made by members of *cohors prima Flavia Commagenorum* and the *Numerus Surorum Sagittariorum*⁴⁴³. In this Roman city, the cult of Mithras was linked to the cult of natural springs, since one of the episodes concerning his cult describes Mithras shooting an arrow in the rock from which water started to flow. A sculptural monument depicts the scene of *Mithra petrogenitus* and the base of the votive monument is pierced, so that water can flow from it⁴⁴⁴ (**Fig. IV. 7**). On one of the fountains from the city, a statue of the god was placed; Mithras is depicted as a child, having a knife and a torch in his hands⁴⁴⁵.

Another mithraeum was discovered in Slăveni in 1837 and was investigated by Mihalache Ghica, Colonel Vladimir de Blaremburg and Marquis of Châteaugiron, the French consul in Bucharest. Blaremburg published in the *Muzeul Național, gazetă literară și industrială* periodical two articles regarding the investigation⁴⁴⁶.

The underground construction had the floor paved with bricks and the walls plastered with mortar and painted in different colours⁴⁴⁷. According to Dumitru Tudor, the temple had a long room decorated with marble reliefs depicting Mithras; the room had lateral benches on its lateral walls⁴⁴⁸. Several square bricks of big dimensions were discovered at the entrance to the edifice which probably constituted the foundation or the pedestal of a portico⁴⁴⁹. Several altars dedicated by the soldiers of the *ala I Hispanorum* were discovered in the mithraeum, something that points to the military character of the cult edifice⁴⁵⁰. The list of the votive monuments discovered in the mithraeum include five mithraic bas-reliefs, a fragmented statue of Cautopates, one of the two male figures that accompanied Mithras in artistic representations, an image of Jupiter, a

⁴⁴³ Tudor D., 1868a, p. 354; Petolescu C., 1971, p. 651, 653; Tudor D., 1978, p. 388; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 237.

⁴⁴⁴ Petolescu C., 1971, p. 651; Macrea M., 2007, p. 207.

⁴⁴⁵ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 354.

⁴⁴⁶ Vladimir de Blaremburg, 1837, "Antichități pământești" in *Muzeul Național, gazetă literară și industrială*, II, no. 8 (November), p. 61-63, reproduced in Petolescu C., 2007, p. 216-217.

⁴⁴⁷ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 233; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 81; Popescu M., 2004, p. 240.

⁴⁴⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 358.

⁴⁴⁹ Tudor D., 1978, p. 358; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 81.

⁴⁵⁰ Tudor D., 1978, p. 358; Popescu M., 2004, p. 240; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 216-217.

representation of Diana and vessels for sacrifices. The cult of Mithras was brought to Slăveni by the members of *numerus Surorum sagittariorum*⁴⁵¹.

The mithraeum in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa was discovered in 1881 and it was archaeologically investigated until 1883 by G. Téglás and P. Király⁴⁵²; they tried to draw the plan of the mithraeum based on analogies with the cult edifices from Heddernheim and Ostia. Their result was accepted by F. Cumont and M.J. Vermaseren, but it was not accepted by most Romanian scholars⁴⁵³. The edifice was located *extra muros*, east of the south-western corner of the city, on the left bank of Apa Mică River; it was an underground construction, known as *spelaeum*⁴⁵⁴.

The two stairs that delimited the *cella* from the central nave were removed in 1879 by the owner of the land. An altar for sacrifices was probably located in front of the stairs. The foundation was made of irregular stones and the floor of a *cocciopesto* layer with a thickness of 0.5 metres. The red walls of the *cella* were decorated with blue sinuous lines and squares. Several stairs marked the entrance to the central nave. Fragments of columns were discovered and this led to the assumption that the edifice had three naves separated by two rows of columns. The naves had a vaulted roof, as numerous fragments of tiles suggest, that had the purpose to imitate the ceiling of the natural cave where the mithraic rituals and ceremonies were performed⁴⁵⁵.

The temple was destroyed by fire two times, as traces of ashes indicate. The first destruction dated from 170 AD during the invasion of the Marcomanni, when the *extra muros* area was partly destroyed; therefore, the temple was built prior to this date and restored after it. For the second destruction no date can be defined⁴⁵⁶. An altar with inscription mentions the restoration of the temple:

INVI[CTO MITHRAE ?]/ PRO SALVTE ET MEMORIA SEX(ti)
V[AL(erii)...COL(oniae) VLP(iae) TRAI(anae) AUG(ustar)?]/

⁴⁵¹ Petolescu C., 2007, p. 207.

⁴⁵² Daicoviciu C. and Daicoviciu H., 1962, p. 38; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 88; Pop C., 1994, p. 69; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 233; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 81; Macrea M., 2007, p. 299; Petolescu C., 2007, p. 208.

⁴⁵³ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 233; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 82.

⁴⁵⁴ Daicoviciu C. and Daicoviciu H., 1962, p. 38; Tudor D., 1968a, p. 88; Pop C., 1994, p. 69; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 234; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 81.

⁴⁵⁵ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 234-235; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 82.

⁴⁵⁶ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 235; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 84.

*DAC(icae) SARMI[ZEG]ETV[S(ae)] T[EMPL]UM [VE/TUSTATE
CONLAPSUM RESTITUIT?]/ SEX(tus) VALE[RIUS]...*⁴⁵⁷

Several cult objects were discovered in this mithraeum, such as bas-reliefs depicting the scene of tauroctony and other episodes of the cult, a votive plaque, and altars and columns with inscriptions, as well as ceramic fragments and animal bones⁴⁵⁸.

2.2.2. Epigraphic evidence of edifices

Epigraphic evidence point to the existence of three cult edifices dedicated to Mithra in Apulum and its territory, information also supported by the discovery of more than 60 epigraphic and sculptural monuments in this Roman city⁴⁵⁹.

An altar with inscription mentions the construction of a mithraeum on the expense of Stratonius(...)anus, *decurion* and *flamen* of the city during the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211)⁴⁶⁰:

*[D]EO INVICTO/ [MI]t(h)RAE SAC(rum)/ [?] STATORIUS/
[...]ANVS DEC(urio)/ [ET] FLAMEN M/[UNI]C(ipii) SEP(timii)
AP[UL(ensis)]/ [IN]VICT(i) TEMPLVM PR[O]/ [SAL]VTEM SVA
SVORUM/ [QUE] P[ECVNIA] MEA FECI/ NI*⁴⁶¹

Numerous votive monuments were discovered in 1930 in the garden of S. Oancea, an inhabitant of Alba-Iulia, modern Apulum. They include 7 altars with inscriptions dedicated to Mithra, statue pedestals, votive reliefs and a Doric capital of a votive column on top of which a statue was fixed; the variety of the votive monuments support the hypothesis that they all came from a mithraeum⁴⁶².

A temple dedicated to *Soli Invicto Mithrae* is mentioned by an inscription on an altar or a statue base made by C. Nummius Amandus. The place of discovery of this

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 176-178.

⁴⁵⁸ Macrea M., 2007, p. 208-209; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 235.

⁴⁵⁹ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 161; Husar A., 2003, p. 137.

⁴⁶⁰ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 137; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 29

⁴⁶¹ Cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 176.

⁴⁶² Băluță, C.L., 1974, 130-132; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 237; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 137.

votive monument is not known; consequently the identification of the cult edifice is not possible⁴⁶³.

S(oli) I(nvicto) M(ithrae)/ C(aius) NVMMIVS/ AMANDVS/ QVI ET/
*TEMPLVM*⁴⁶⁴

Close to Apulum, in Oarda de Sus, a votive stele was discovered in 1946. The stele was revealed in one of the banks of a river after a landslide; the place of discovery of the stele, which was usually chosen for the construction of mithraea, and the stele itself point to the existence of a cult edifice dedicated to Mithras⁴⁶⁵.

A list of the names of the participants to the cult of Mithras appear on a fragmentary flagstone also discovered in Apulum; one of the participant seems to be a *mist(a, -agogus)* and two others were *mil(es)*, the latter being the third rank in the mithraic hierarchy. This can be another indicator of the existence of mithraea in Apulum⁴⁶⁶.

Two altars with inscriptions confirm the existence of a mithraeum in Doştat, though its exact location has not been identified⁴⁶⁷. The first altar was dedicated to Mithra by Publius Aelius Artemidorus, born in Macedonia and a *sacerdos creatus Palmyrenis*. He made the offering during his visit to the mithraeum of the settlement of Doştat; therefore, it is clear that the temple was built there prior to his visit⁴⁶⁸.

[INV]TO [SOLI DEO]/ [GE]NITORI P(ublius) AEL(ius) ART]/
EMIDORVS DE[C(urio)?]/ SACER(dos) CREATVS A PALM[YRE]/
NIS DO(mo) MACEDONIA ET ADVE[N]/ TOR HVIVS TEMPLI PRO
*SE/ ET SVIS FECIT [L(iberenter)?]*⁴⁶⁹

The second inscription mentions a *libertus*, Lucius Aelius Hylas, who built a niche in the mithraeum. In this niche he placed a votive relief for the health of himself,

⁴⁶³ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 137-138.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁴⁶⁵ Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 137. In I. Pioariu, 2000-2001, p. 32 and 33, the author mentions a possible location of a mithraeum in Oarda de Jos.

⁴⁶⁶ Macrea M., 2007, p. 213.

⁴⁶⁷ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 141; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 235; I. Pioariu, 2000-2001, p. 33.

⁴⁶⁸ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 141; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 235; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 138.

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 176; Macrea M., 2007, p. 210.

of his son, Horiens, and of his wife, Apuleia⁴⁷⁰. This altar with inscription is one of the few dedicated to Mithras that mention the name of a woman⁴⁷¹.

*IO(vi) S(oli) INVI(cto)/ DEO GENITORI/ R(upe) N(ati)/ L(ucius)
AEL(ius) HYLAS XX L(ibertus) PR(o) (salute) SVA ET HORIENTIS
FIL(ii) SVI ET APVLEIA EIVS SIG(num) NVMINIS CVM ABSIDATA/
EX VOTO POS(uit)*⁴⁷²

2.2.3. Possible locations of religious edifices

Several votive reliefs (5) were revealed on the territory of Cincșor⁴⁷³; their discovery led to the assumption that a cult edifice was built in honour of Mithras in this Roman camp where *cohors II Flavia Bessorum* settled⁴⁷⁴.

Dumitru Tudor assumes that a mithraeum was probably built in Drobeta. His argument lies firstly in the discovery of a bas-relief of big dimensions depicting several episodes from the Mithraic cult, though only a few were preserved: in the presence of Sol, Mithras shoots an arrow in the stone from which water flowed, Mithras riding the bull and the bust of Luna above the cave where the sacrifice was to take place. Moreover, bronze statue depicting the god, standing, with this leg on top of the bull's head was also discovered in Drobeta, as well as an altar with dedication which point to the popularity of the cult⁴⁷⁵.

A mithraeum could have been located in the Roman camp of Pojejena, as numerous votive monuments (14) discovered close to the north-eastern tower seem to suggest. The marble monuments are often fragmented and their inscriptions are poorly preserved; they depict the central scene of the tauroctony with secondary scenes displayed on top of and/or below it⁴⁷⁶.

Potaissa could have been one of the Roman cities in Dacia where a mithraeum was constructed, probably on one of the slopes of Cetății Hill. This assumption is

⁴⁷⁰ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 141; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 235; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 138.

⁴⁷¹ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 235.

⁴⁷² Cf. Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 176; Macrea M., 2007, p. 210.

⁴⁷³ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 281; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 239; Popescu M., 2004, p. 243.

⁴⁷⁴ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 239; Popescu M., 2004, p. 243.

⁴⁷⁵ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 302. Petolescu C., 1971, p. 654 also mentions the votive monuments but the author makes no assumption concerning the existence of a mithraeum based on these finds.

⁴⁷⁶ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238; Macrea M., 2007, p. 208. Petolescu C., 2007, p. 208.

justified by the discovery of a colossal statue depicting Mithras from which only the head survived⁴⁷⁷. The head measures about 0.46-0.47 metres which points to the colossal dimensions of the entire statues which was about 3.5 metres⁴⁷⁸. Similar colossal statues depicting Mithras were discovered in the temples of Ostia as well; therefore a mithraeum could have been built in Potaissa⁴⁷⁹. A hand of big dimensions discovered in Potaissa could have belonged to this statue⁴⁸⁰. The presence of Mithras cult in Potaissa is also confirmed by eight other votive monuments, such as a fragment of a bas-relief, two marble reliefs and several altars with inscriptions⁴⁸¹.

A small temple could have been built in honour of Sol-Mithras in Șard⁴⁸² as an inscription on an altar points. The altar was dedicated to the god by C. Iul. Valens; he was the *haruspex* of the city and the chief priest of the mithraeum (*antistes huiusce loci*). The presence of a chief priest in Șard is an argument for the existence of a temple. A bilingual inscription can also be linked to the existence of a cult edifice in this settlement; it was made by Abedallath, whom Dumitru Tudor considered to be a Hellenized Semite⁴⁸³.

The Veterani Cave could have functioned as a mithraic *spelaeum*. The cave has been archaeologically investigated between 1964 and 1965 under the supervision of C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor and between 1968 and 1969 by D. Rosetti, N. Hamparțumian and V. Boroneanț. A 4 metres deep pit was discovered under the wall located at the entrance of the gallery; the pit contained successive layers belonging to the Criș, Coțofeni, Kostolac and Vucedol cultures and a Roman layer on top of which were deposited pieces of harness and medieval and modern weapons. The Roman layer revealed tips of spears, a clay vessel, two coins and bricks with the stamp *DRP Dierna*; these discoveries led to the assumption that the pit was used for depositing the rests of the mithraic feasts. An altar made of friable sandstone was discovered inside the cave and close to its entrance, at a depth of 1.30-1.80 metres. The inscription on the altar was difficult to read, but V. Boroneanț assumed that it had been dedicated to Mithras. A Roman wall was identified

⁴⁷⁷ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 156; Macrea M., 2007, p. 214.

⁴⁷⁸ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 209.

⁴⁷⁹ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238.

⁴⁸⁰ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 238; Rusu-Pescaru A. and Alicu D., 2000, p. 156.

⁴⁸¹ Macrea M., 2007, p. 214; Bărbulescu M., 2009, p. 209.

⁴⁸² Tudor D., 1968a, p. 177; Pioariu I., 2000-2001, p. 33.

⁴⁸³ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 177-178.

inside the cave at a depth of 1.30-1.50 metres; the wall stopped 1 metre from the wall which was closing the entrance. The cave was set on fire and fortified several times, a fact which does not allow any final conclusions related to the function of the cave; however, the votive altar, the coins, the bricks with stamps, the interior Roman wall and the exterior pit could indicate that the cave was a *spelaeum* dedicated to Mithras⁴⁸⁴.

A possible location of a mithraeum could have been in the territory of Germisara, in Vințu de Jos, Alba County, at the confluence of Mureș and Pianului Rivers. Three votive monuments were revealed; structures of walls were identified close to the place of discovery of these artistic monuments which led to the assumption that they were part of the mithraeum⁴⁸⁵.

⁴⁸⁴ Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 236.

⁴⁸⁵ Tudor D., 1968a, p. 136; Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 239.

Annexe IV

Fig. IV.1. Distribution map of Mithras cult cf. Popescu M., 2004, Planche XXV.

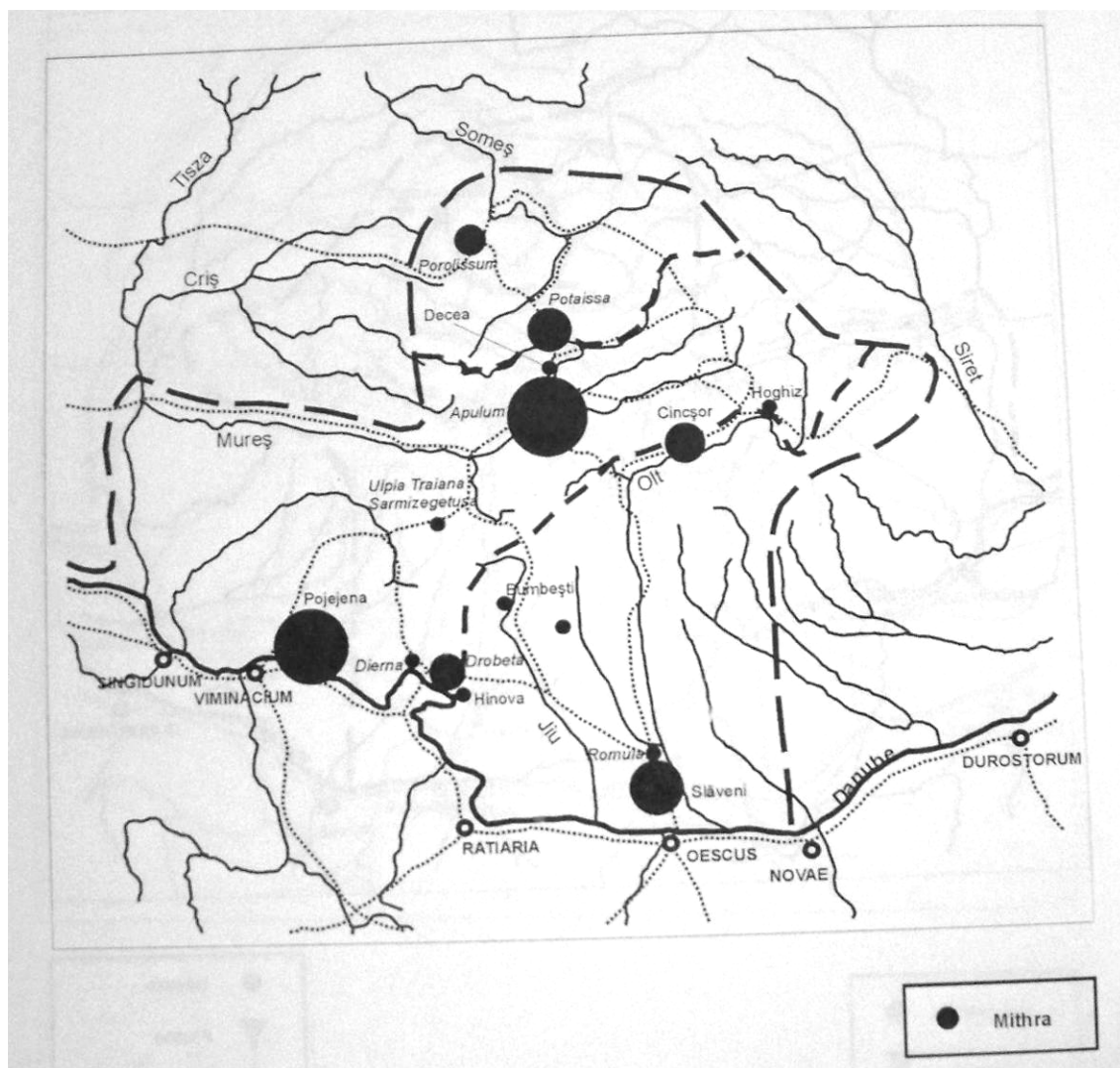


Fig. IV. 2. Relief depicting the scene of tauroctony from Vințu de Jos cf. Macrea M., 2007.

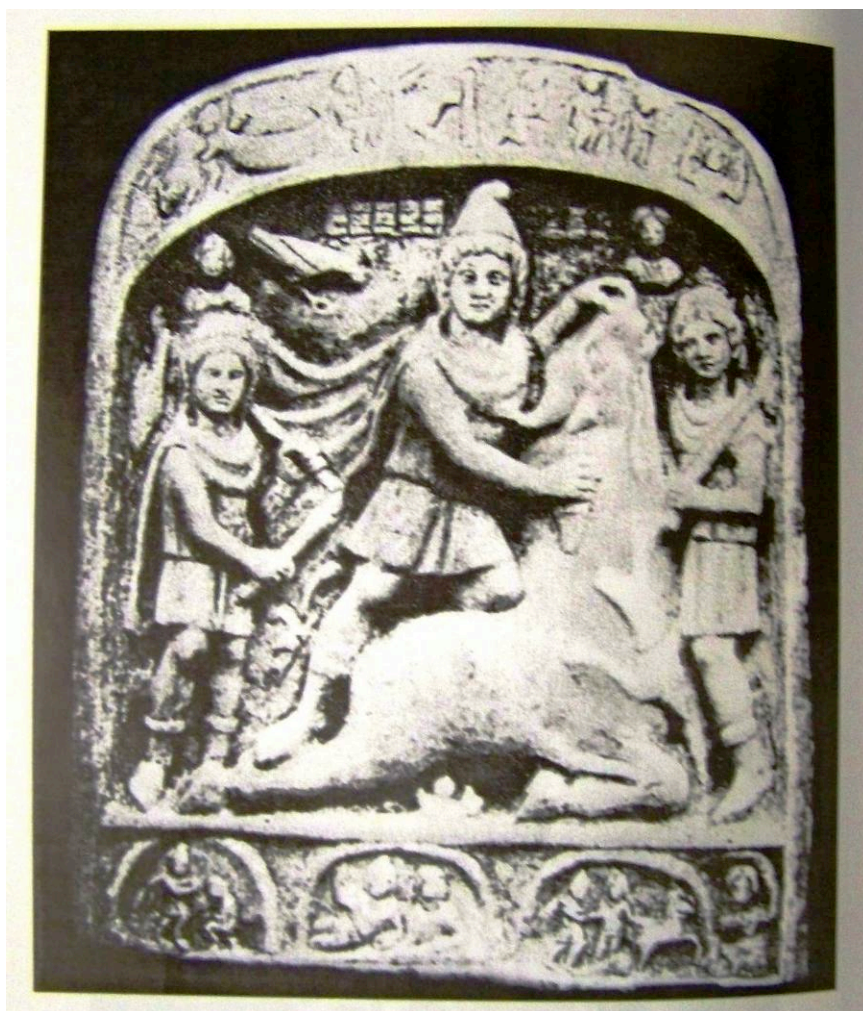


Fig. IV. 3. Altar with inscription dedicated to Nabarze Deo from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa cf. Cumont F., 2007, p. 149, Fig. 36.

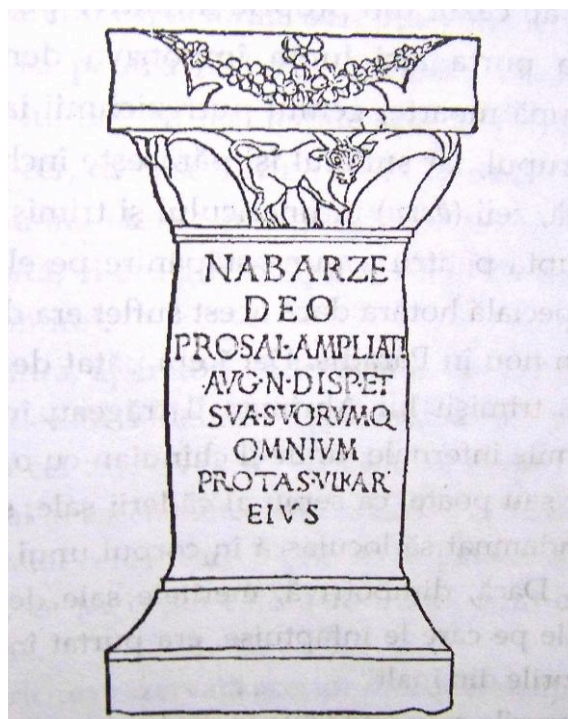


Fig. IV. 4. The plan of the mithraeum in Decea according to the manuscript discovered at the History Museum of Aiud cf. Pintilie M., 1999-2000, p. 232, Fig. 1.

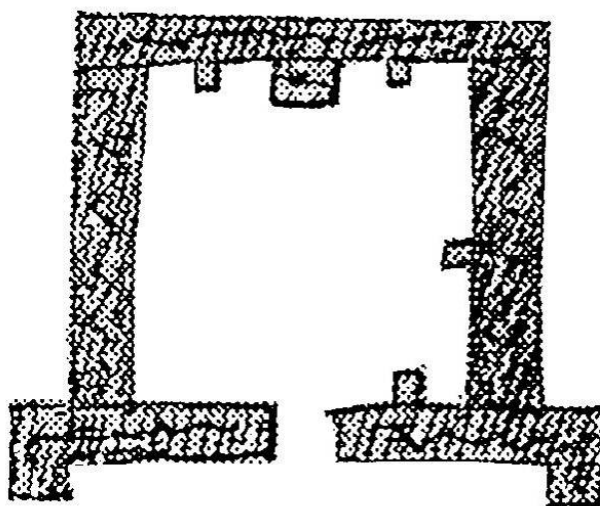


Fig. IV. 5. Plan of the fort on Pomiet Hill, building C3 in *latus sinistrum* is the underground temple cf. Gudea N., 2003, p. 236, Fig. 17.

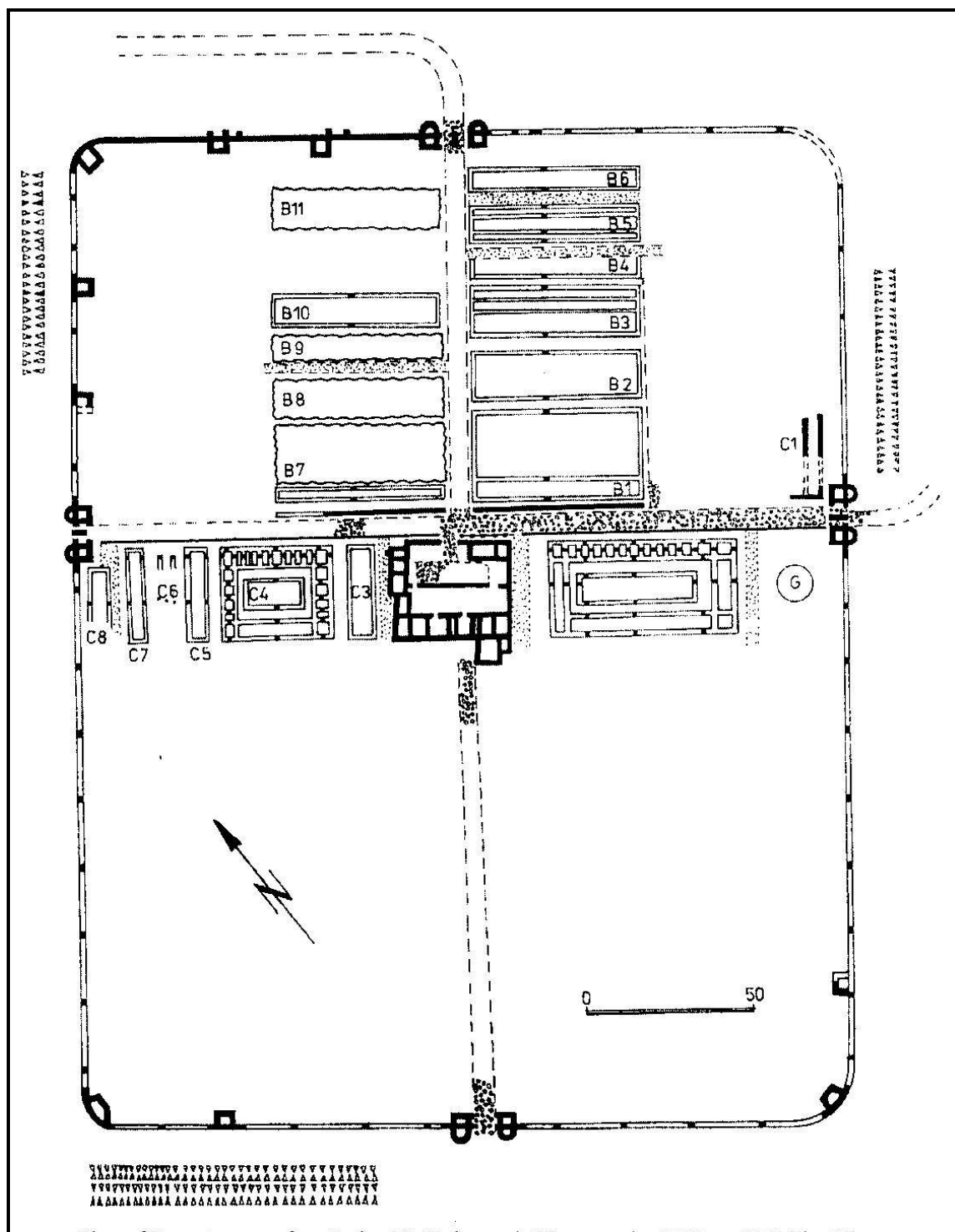


Fig. IV. 6. Plan of the buildings on *latus sinistrum*, building C3 being the underground temple cf. Gudea N., 2003, p. 237, Fig. 18.

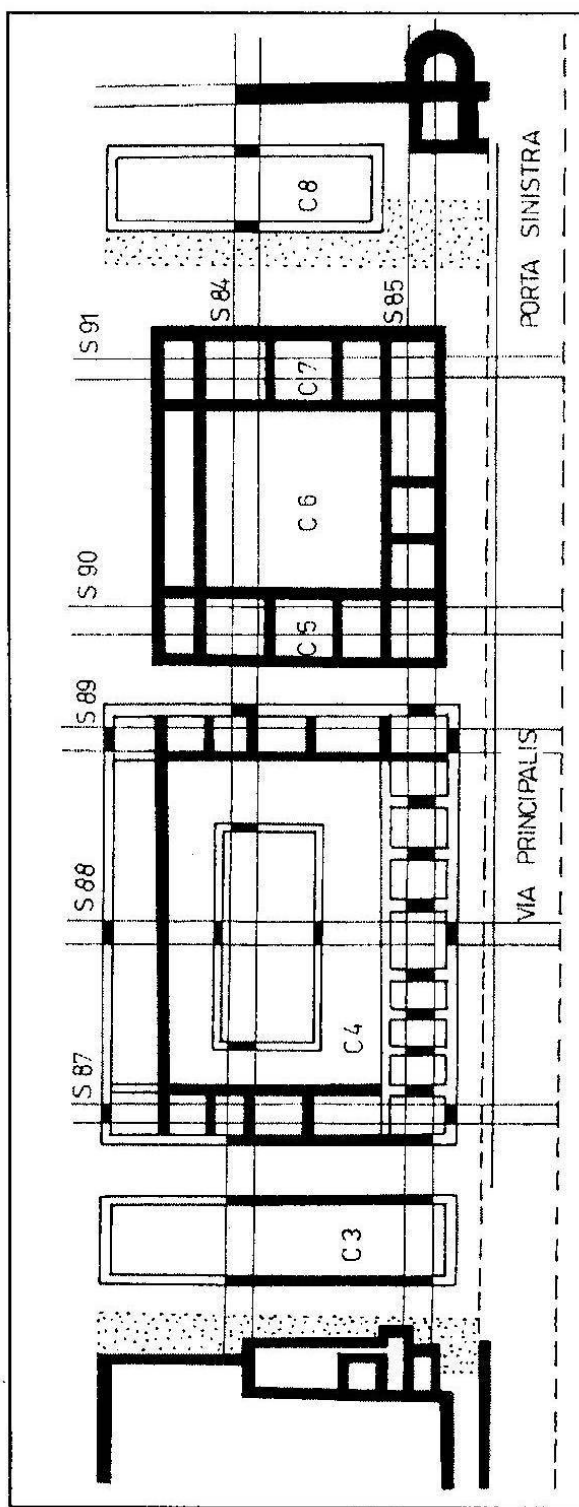


Fig. IV. 7. Sculptural monument of *Mithras petrogenitus* from Romula cf. Petolescu C., 1971, p. 652, Fig. 7.



CONCLUSIONS

The study of the oriental cults in Roman Dacia allows several conclusions to be drawn concerning their dissemination, the vehicles that assured their spreading and the evidence of their presence, such as artistic representations, the epigraphic data and the cult edifices. The oriental cults in Roman Dacia were defined according to the ethno-geographic factor; consequently, each group of cults has been analyzed in a separate chapter of this thesis: the cults of Asia Minor, the Egyptian cults, the Syrian cults and Mithras's cult.

The list of the cults of Asia Minor includes Cybele, Attis, Men and Glycon. They were introduced in Dacia by colonizers of oriental origin, as the epigraphic evidence indicated. Cybele was worshipped in urban settlements, such as Drobeta, Napoca, Romula, Sucidava and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, as well in the rural settlements of Aquae, Germisara, Mordovenesti and Statio Aquensis. Several inscriptions dedicated to Cybele were discovered in Apulum, Drobeta and Aquae. The epigraphic evidence pointed to the fact that Cybele's cult was introduced in the beginning of the 2nd century (Apulum). It is a known fact that the women were the worshippers of Cybele; in Dacia, this fact can be supported by two inscribed altars discovered in Drobeta. Artistic representations of Cybele were discovered in Germisara, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Romula, Statio Aquensis, Napoca and Moldovenesti. The small number of the artistic representations does not allow any clear conclusions concerning their iconography.

Attis was known in Dacia as the protector of the funeral monuments, since he is depicted on 72 such monuments; no epigraphic evidence concerning his cult was discovered. Only one votive statue was discovered on the Dacian territory, in Sucidava. The most common representations depict Attis wearing the Phrygian cap and costume, with a *pedum* in his hand and one of his legs crossed over the other. Because he was a funeral artistic element, his facial features expressed melancholy and sadness. Judging by the number of representations, his cult was popular in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Apulum, Ampelum, as well as in Cristesti, Deva, Gârbău, Micia, Germisara, Ilișua,

Sucidava and Tibiscum. His image was depicted on aedicule, which were discovered in Apulum and Potaissa.

The cult of Sabazios was not so popular in Dacia, though a small number of votive monuments were discovered in Drobeta, Potaissa, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa and Tibiscum. A bronze votive hand with typical iconography was discovered in Jena, Timiș County. The cult of Men was not popular either, since only a clay pattern, a bronze statue and four altars were dedicated to him. This scarcity of votive monuments points to the fact that his cult was assimilated in the cult of Attis, since the latter acquired the attributes and characteristics of the former. Glycon is known in Roman Dacia only from two inscribed altars discovered in Apulum.

As for the cult edifices dedicated to Asia Minor cults, no such constructions have been archaeologically investigated in Roman Dacia. The epigraphic evidence explicitly mentioned several cult edifices which could have been built in Apulum and Drobeta in honour of Cybele, while another one could have been dedicated to Sabazios in Apulum. In addition to this, there are some possible locations of religious edifices dedicated to Cybele (Germisara, Napoca, Sucidava and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa) and Sabazios (Drobeta and Tibiscum).

The most popular Egyptian gods worshipped in Roman Dacia were Serapis, Isis, Harpocrates and Ammon. The artistic representations of Serapis were discovered in Potaissa and Romula (replicas of the Bryaxis type of statue), as well as in Sucidava (the god's head from an alabaster statuette). Clay medallions were revealed in Apulum and Cristești, while engraved gems were discovered in Romula and Potaissa. The name of Serapis appears on five inscribed altars discovered in Apulum (3 altars) and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (2). Moreover, his name appeared written in Greek on a clay medallion which was discovered in Alburnus Maior.

Artistic representations of Isis include statuettes discovered in Drobeta, Porolissum, Apulum and Romula. Inscribed altars were revealed in Apulum, Potaissa, Romula and Sucidava. Only two bronze statuettes depicting Harpocrates were discovered on Dacian territory, one in Potaissa and one in Porolissum. Isis and Harpocrates are depicted on one engraved gem each.

Isis and Serapis, the divine couple, appear on two inscribed altars from Apulum and one from Potaissa, and on an engraved gem from Romula. Artistic representations of the Egyptian triad (Isis, Serapis and Harpocrates) were discovered in Dacia as well (Sucidava and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa). Ammon, the bearded god with ram horns, is usually depicted on funeral monuments, which were revealed in Apulum, Micia, Napoca, Sebeș and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. In addition to this, a stone-made head of the god and a bronze statuette were discovered in Potaissa and a bronze statue in Târgu-Mureș.

Only one cult edifice dedicated to one of the Egyptian gods was archaeologically investigated: the temple of Serapis in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. Epigraphic evidence indicate that temples of Isis were constructed in Micia and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. A possible location of another temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess could have been in Potaissa.

The Syrian cults were worshipped in Dacia by soldiers of oriental origin, such as the Commagene, the Palmyrian and the Syrian. They played an active role in the dissemination of their native cults, as the epigraphic evidence suggests. The Syrian gods which were worshipped in Dacia are: Dea Syria, Azizos, Sol, Deus Aeternus and the syncretic gods, Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Hierapolitanus and Jupiter Heliopolitanus. Several deities originating from Palmyra were also worshipped in Dacia, such as Bêl, Malachbêl and Iarhibol.

No artistic representations of Dea Syria were discovered in Roman Dacia; consequently, the areas of dissemination of her cult are suggested by epigraphic evidence. Inscribed altars were discovered in Apulum, Micia, Napoca, Porolissum and Romula. The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus was very popular in Dacia, as numerous artistic representations and epigraphic data indicate; such votive monuments were discovered in urban centres, as well as in rural territories. The types of artistic representations include the Dolichenian votive hands (Mișcov and Cătunele de Sus), votive plaques and reliefs (Potaissa, Răcari, and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa) and statues (Amăraștii de Sus, Ilișua and Porolissum). The altars with inscriptions also point to the centres where his cult was present, such as Apulum, Ampelum, Samum, Napoca and others.

Under the phenomenon of syncretism, several Syrian gods were assimilated with Jupiter, thus, resulting Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Jupiter Hierapolitanus and Jupiter Turmasgades; these three syncretic deities were worshipped in Micia. Azizos, another Syrian god, was worshipped in Apulum, Napoca, Suceanu and Potaissa, where altars with inscriptions were discovered. More than 20 votive monuments were dedicated to Deus Aeternus and his cult was present in Apulum, Ampelum, Germisara, Micia, Tibiscum, Sighișoara and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. Several votive monuments dedicated to Sol certify the presence of his cult in Roman Dacia, in settlements such as Tibiscum, Ilișua, Romula, Locusteni and Dierna. His name is mentioned in several dedications as well (Apulum, Germisara, Micia, Napoca, Păuleni and Potaissa). The cult of Bêl is present in Tibiscum and Porolissum, where two altars with inscriptions were discovered; they were dedicated by soldiers, which could point to the military character of the Palmyrian god. A votive flagstone with inscription, discovered in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, mentions the triad Malachbêl, Benefal and Manavat. Malachbêl appears on inscribed altars from Tibiscum and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The cult of Iarhibol was present in Apulum and Tibiscum, where two priests dedicated an inscribed altar each.

Archaeological investigations revealed several cult edifices dedicated to the Syrian deities, such Jupiter Dolichenus (Porolissum and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa), Jupiter Hierapolitanus (Micia), Malagbelus (Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa), the Palmyrian gods (Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa). Epigraphic evidence indicates the constructions of temples dedicated to Dea Syria (Porolissum and Napoca), Jupiter Dolichenus (Porolissum), Aeternus (Apulum), Deus Azizos (Potaissa) and Sol (Apulum, Micia). Several possible locations of cult edifices could have been in Samum (dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus), Apulum (Iarhibol) and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (Malagbêl).

Mithras was worshipped especially by soldiers, who brought this oriental cult to Dacia, as well as by colonists, slaves and freedman. The numerous votive monuments indicate that Mithras' cult was the most popular oriental cult in Roman Dacia. The artistic representations of Mithras depict scenes from his myth, the central one being the tauroctony; several such monuments were discovered in Apulum, Drobeta, Potaissa and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. *Mithras petrogenitus* is also depicted on artistic

representations, such as the ones discovered Decea Mureşului, Romula and Potaissa. *Invictus* is the most common epithet that appears on dedications; its Iranian correspondent, Nabarze, appears on two dedications. Most of the altars were dedicated by soldiers. Several cult edifices, which were dedicated to Mithras, have been archaeologically investigated in Roman Dacia, such as those from Apulum, Decea, Romula, Slăveni and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. Epigraphic evidence indicates that several other temples were built in Apulum, Oarda de Sus and Doştat. The list of cult edifices could be enlarged by the ones which could have been built in Cincşor, Drobeta, Potaissa, Pojejena, Şard and Veterani.

The spread of the oriental cults in Dacia was uneven, as the votive monuments indicate. Several urban settlements were major cultural centres, in which various oriental deities were worshipped, such as Apulum, Drobeta, Micia, Potaissa, Porolissum, Romula and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The oriental cults were also present in the rural territories of these cities, but in a lower degree.

The oriental deities were worshipped by several social categories, such as the soldiers, the merchants, the freedmen and the slaves, as they are indicated by epigraphic evidence. It is difficult to judge which of these categories played the most important role in the dissemination of the Oriental cults; however, it is important to stress that the soldiers were more active than the rest. In a foreign land, full of danger, the soldier needed the divine protection in order to assure the victory of his campaigns and in order to overcome the challenges of his occupation. Taking into consideration these social categories, the oriental cults were successful because they were accessible to all social classes. In addition to this, the members of an ethnic group of oriental origin, present within a settlement, managed to maintain their beliefs in their national gods, as numerous votive monuments indicate.

The epigraphic data also helped to identify the origin of the worshippers, when it was possible; however, in some cases, it is not easy to fully assign the origin because the oriental cults were not necessarily brought straight from the oriental provinces. At the time of their dissemination in Dacia, they were already part of the religious life of the Roman world and, in the case of Dacia, the worshippers came from the western or central provinces of the Empire as well.

The variety of artistic representations indicates that the worshippers were familiarized with the myths and doctrines of the oriental cults and their quality point to the social condition of the worshipper, as well as to the skills of the artists. Expensive materials were used to depict scenes of the oriental cults, but some more accessible and cheap ones were used as well. The artists used the imported artistic representations as a source of inspiration, in order to depict these myths, and in terms of thematic, there is a tendency towards unity in Roman Dacia.

The Oriental gods were worshipped in cult edifices, of which some have been archaeologically investigated; based on epigraphic evidence, the list of cult edifices was enlarged. Some elements, like the presence of numerous votive monuments, or the presence of priests or associations with religious character, were also considered as indicators of cult edifices in certain settlements.

Taking into consideration the dissemination of the epigraphic evidence, of the artistic representations and of the cult edifices, the presence of oriental cults in Roman Dacia was uneven in terms of space and time: several cults were present in some small areas, while others gathered many followers in the most important urban centres. Moreover, the analysis of the period in which certain deities were worshipped indicates that some oriental cults had a short life in the spiritual landscape of the population inhabiting Dacia, such as the cult of Glycon. However, due to the fact that, perhaps, a certain number of votive monuments were destroyed or lost, either in ancient or in modern times, it is difficult to draw absolute conclusions. Further discoveries and studies will enhance the results of this thesis by confirming or not the different hypothesis and conclusions.

SUMMARY

As the title suggests, this thesis focuses on the analysis of the Oriental cults and their dissemination within the Roman Dacia between the 2nd to the 3rd century. Consequently, several issues have been studied, such as the votive monuments (artistic representations and epigraphic evidence) and cult edifices (temple, mithraeum).

After the introduction, the first chapter focused on Asia Minor cults; the main deities worshipped in Dacia were Cybele, Attis, Men, Sabazios and Glycon. The second chapter included Egyptian deities, such as Isis, Serapis, Harpocrates and Ammon. The third chapter was dedicated to the study of the cults of Syrian deities, such as Dea Syria, Azizos, Sol, Deus Aeternus and the syncretic gods Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Hierapolitanus and Jupiter Heliopolitanus. Several deities originating from Palmyra were also worshipped in Dacia, such as Bêl, Malachbêl and Iarhibol. In the last chapter, the dissemination of Mithras's cult in Dacian territories was analysed.

The study of the dissemination of the oriental deities also focused on the main vehicles that enabled the spread of the cults, such as the soldiers, the merchants, the workers of the administrative system, freedmen and slaves. Their names, as they appear on epigraphic monuments, were used to identify, where it was certain, their origin. As far as the artistic representations are concerned, a global picture was provided, as far as the selected bibliography allowed it. Several categories of monuments and types of iconography have been identified. The cult edifices were analyzed according to a typology: archaeologically investigated edifices, epigraphic evidence of edifices and possible locations of cult edifices. By studying the places of discovery of the votive monuments and of cult edifices, the settlements where certain oriental cults were present or popular have been identified.

Taking everything into consideration, the dissemination of the Oriental cults was uneven on the territory of Roman Dacia. The most popular oriental cult was that of Mithras, followed by the Syrian cults, the Asia Minor cult and the Egyptian cult. The results of this study are as accurate as the bibliographic material permitted; therefore, these results will improve or will be changed, according to the evolution of the archaeological investigations and the studies that will be published.

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